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EDITORIAL

TARNISHED SILBER

The know-it-alls in the Boston news media—the ones who thought Mike Dukakis was going all the way to the White House—declared a week before the primary that John Silber's campaign for the Democratic gubernatorial nomination was dead and buried. Silber, whose mouth is as big and as dirty as Boston Harbor, had remarked invidiously upon all kinds of vulnerable communities, but he seemed to have delivered his own *coup de grâce* when he said he wouldn't take his campaign to the black neighborhood of Roxbury: "There is no point in my making a speech on crime control to a group of drug addicts."

Suddenly Silber's campaign was in gear again, and in the last days before the election, tracking polls had him gaining on his opponent, former Attorney General Frank Bellotti, a tired fixture of state Democratic politics for thirty years. What the Boston commentators all missed—or denied—is that racism *wins* elections in America. Silber benefited from several circumstances, but without that vile slander against blacks, he might not have beaten Bellotti by nine points.

The idea that John Silber (a Reaganite on foreign policy, and a right-wing member of the Kissinger commission on Central America) will now cavort in the top echelons of the Democratic Party—at least until Election Day, when with any luck Republican William Weld, an old-fashioned Yankee moderate, will beat him—demonstrates again the party's utter and irredeemable bankruptcy. Will Ron Brown front for Silber in Roxbury? Will Mario Cuomo and Bill Bradley fly in to fundraise? Those Democrats who believe that the party can win by standing for something—beginning with simple fairness and civility—should condemn Silber and his noxiously negative campaign.

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DEATH PENALTY POLITICS
Diana R. Gordon

IS YUGOSLAVIA CRACKING UP?
Slavenka Drakulić

COUNTRY CLUB SEGS
Diane McWhorter

THE PEACE MOVEMENT NOW
Randy Kehler

DICEMAN'S PEOPLE
Fredric Paul Smoler

L.B.J.'S MONEYMEN
Geoffrey Rips

BURYING ALLENDE

DEATH AND REBIRTH IN CHILE

ARIEL DORFMAN

Santiago, Chile

On the night of September 11, 1973, when Gen. Augusto Pinochet ordered the body of Salvador Allende to be secretly buried in a grave by the sea, he could not have imagined that the very President he had just overthrown and whose legacy he was confident of extirpating forever from the memory of Chile would someday be given a tumultuous second funeral, in which many of the very people who had contributed to his downfall would honor him. It took Pinochet only a few hours to be rid of the man he had betrayed. It would take the Chilean people, on the other hand, seventeen years of resistance to rescue Salvador Allende from the anonymous earth to which he had been banished, because in order to do so, first they would have to accomplish the more dangerous task of rescuing the democracy their President had died to defend.

On March 11 of this year, as soon as Patricio Aylwin, Chile's new democratic President, entered La Moneda, the presidential palace where Allende had died, plans for a public farewell and burial were started. Aylwin's first visitor was, in fact, Allende's widow, Tencha—and his first words of greeting to her were, "I owe Salvador a funeral." And he kept his promise: The man who, as president of the Christian Democratic Party in 1973, had led the opposition to Allende; who had refused to sign an agreement with him that might have avoided the coup; who had gone to the military a

(*Cont. on p. 384*)

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LETTERS.

A CASE OF 'ARYAN SELF-DEFENSE'

Fallbrook, Calif.

Elinor Langer's article, "The American Neo-Nazi Movement Today" [July 16/23] was one of the more accurate articles written on the subject. However, Langer overlooked several important points regarding the present lawsuit, *Seraw v. Metzger*, in Portland, Oregon.

First, she ignored the actual circumstances of the street brawl in which Seraw was killed and claims the tragedy was a "racially motivated attack." Langer overlooked evidence that indicates that Seraw or his companions provoked the fight. . . . Kenneth Mieske and Kyle Brewster's racial views (of being white and proud) probably made them more likely to react to insults from blacks, but it was only a factor in the whole incident.

Langer also ignored the unpleasant problem that Mieske and Brewster were both poor, young, and put under intense pressure to plea-bargain to the original criminal charges. The boys copped a plea. Unfortunately, their guilty pleas will be used by the Southern Poverty Law Center to preclude them from defending against the civil action.

I believe that the S.P.L.C. has tried to exploit a tragedy as a fundraising matter. It has sent out lurid direct mailings to raise money for "legal action" against me. The mailings incorrectly claim that Seraw was a student. Enclosed with the mailings were fliers that proclaimed "Get Out Filthy Jew Pigs." It appears that S.P.L.C. staff members made up the fliers as a publicity gimmick. The S.P.L.C. is a privately owned for-profit business.

Fighting "white racism" is presently a popular thing to do, and many groups raise money claiming to do so. However, the suit filed against me by the S.P.L.C. should cause editors and writers as well as the average citizen a certain amount of apprehension. The suit seeks to impose liability on me for sending newspapers through the mail and otherwise engaging in First Amendment political activity. If I can be liable for sending my newspapers to Oregon maybe *The Nation* can be too.

The principle S.P.L.C. promotes is extreme and dangerous: Advocacy of ideas becomes grounds for liability. Are Marxists to become liable for thieves who "liberate" property from rich capitalists? Is the Pope to become liable for assaults on homosexuals for declaring homosexuality a sin? Is *Playboy* to be liable for inciting lust in a rapist's heart? Stripped of its flamboyant allegations and applied to other situations the basis of the suit is absurd. In any event, I advocate Aryan self-defense, not attacks on other races. Such attacks, and acts of vandalism, are counterproductive.

All I want in this case is to get the truth out. Because my political views are unpopular, I cannot find legal counsel in Oregon and have had to represent myself *in pro per*. Since S.P.L.C.'s fundraising mailings my wife and children have been exposed to numerous death threats, vandalism and a nighttime assault. The system works against skinheads exactly as it did against Communists in the 1950s or Black Panthers in the 1960s. What the case of *Seraw v. Metzger* really shows is that if you are poor or hold unpopular political views, don't expect justice in America.

Tom Metzger
White Aryan Resistance

BY ANY MEANS NECESSARY

New York City

Having read your fine piece on the American neo-Nazi movement, I think that a few very important points should be made. As a militant group that has battled neo-Nazis time and time again from Las Vegas to New York one must also realize that the potential victims of these groups, whether Jewish, black, Spanish-speaking, or whatever, must be willing to go to the streets and confront these haters whenever they show their faces. That will mean that such groups, for example Jews, must both train in karate and learn to defend themselves. What we have done is that when such groups attack synagogues or any Jewish community institution we organize volunteer patrols to insure that a repeat will not happen. Unfortunately there are those in the Jewish community who condemn such actions as "vigilantism," for they themselves were not the victims.

The writer delved into the Can a Holocaust happen here? question, which many Jews try to delude themselves about. Having been in Louisiana personally to organize anti-Duke rallies and activities, there is no question that we are seeing a rising white backlash in this country due to some serious problems that the racists and anti-Semites are trying to pin on Jews. From the lesson of what happened in the democracy known as the Weimar Republic of Germany we must also learn a very important lesson, that it can happen here, and that G-D willing we must do all in our power to insure that Never Again will our people be silent and timid but that now both here and abroad there is a new Jew, dedicated to prevent a repeat of history by any means necessary! *Mordechai Levy*
Jewish Defense Organization

75 YEARS OF VIGILANCE

New York City

Elinor Langer does a commendable job of guiding her readers through the circuitous recent history of domestic hate groups (while erroneously placing them all under the umbrella of neo-Nazism), a subject, she says, "until recently I knew little about." However, Langer's analysis is diminished by the neophyte's enthusiasm for a new discovery. Perhaps this explains why she refers to the Anti-Defamation League's extensive research in the field as merely "cautious accountings."

A.D.L. has been monitoring and combating the activities of hate groups for three-quarters of a century. Langer mistakenly implies that until now the phenomenon has gone largely undetected. She is also off the mark when she equates our praise for law enforcement's widely effective role in countering the problem with blind trust in authority. Langer neglects to mention A.D.L.'s role in alerting law enforcement early on to some of the recent activities of the far right—alerts that helped lead to the successful prosecution of The Order and of a number of skinheads. She also omits A.D.L.'s educational and prejudice-reducing efforts to decrease the number of hate-group supporters—efforts that have produced tangible results. And Langer could have easily resolved her difficulty with A.D.L.'s analysis of anti-Semitism in the farm states in the mid-1980s if she had examined subsequent surveys, which show that A.D.L. had accurately gauged the situation while the other groups she cited had not.

We must also take issue with her inclusion of the John Brown Anti-Klan Committee among groups contributing constructively to the fight against hate groups. The J.B.A.K.C. sees the police as being in league with the Ku Klux Klan. That is not mere "militance" (her word). It is irresponsible rabble-rousing by an antidemocratic far-left organization seeking to exploit the hate-group problem to promote its own agenda.

These criticisms are raised more in sorrow than in anger. Langer's article contains much information to recommend it. We were pleased to assist Langer in the preparation of her article. But experience shows that overstating the case for anti-Semitic and racist activity in the United States is almost as dangerous as not reporting it at all. *Melvin Salberg*

FROM THE THUNDER'S MOUTH

New York City

As Elinor Langer points out, the resurgence of the American neo-Nazi movement has gone largely unreported. However, there are some notable exceptions. In the wake of such incidents as the killing of radio personality Alan Berg in Denver and the death of Order leader Robert Mathews at the hands of F.B.I. agents at Whidbey Island, Washington, both the *Rocky Mountain News* and the Portland *Oregonian* (among other papers) followed up local coverage with articles that traced the links between neo-Nazi groups. Especially deserving of mention are political correspondent James Ridgeway of *The Village Voice* and reporter Wayne King of *The New York Times*.

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EDITORIALS.

Silent Dave

The "Stealth nominee" is how Judge David Souter was described by Senator Howell Heflin, who promised that Souter's "veneer" would be peeled away. But at the confirmation hearings there was little peeling. With a combination of charm, evasiveness, liberal-sounding generalities and plain stubbornness, Souter revealed next to nothing about where he stands on the hard questions—abortion, civil rights and executive power. As Christopher Ryder, testifying on behalf of The Nation Institute's Supreme Court Watch, said, it was "difficult to reconcile his apparent unwillingness to discuss certain cases, principles and personal viewpoints but not others." Liberal senators, whose opposition Souter feared, were disarmed, and ultraconservatives were mildly upset, but few will oppose their President's choice.

Further confusing the picture is the incongruity of the progressivism of much of Souter's testimony with its near total absence during his twenty-two years of public service. His actions as New Hampshire Attorney General show complete support for the reactionary Governor Meldrim Thomson, an almost unvarying hostility to the rights of the accused and no sign of sympathy for women or other groups on society's short end. "Watch what we do instead of what we say," advised that sage of the Nixon Administration, John Mitchell—a discouraging test if applied to Judge Souter.

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Emblematic of this gap between liberal rhetoric and illiberal record are Souter's prosecution of antinuclear demonstrators at Seabrook in 1977 and his demand for prison terms for them. There was also his implausible testimony that he did not know that the Public Service Company of New Hampshire, which owned the plant, contributed some $74,000 to finance the prosecution. Souter insisted that he knew nothing about the P.S.C. contribution until June 30, 1977, even though Thomson had told Souter's deputy about it two months earlier, and the *Manchester Union Leader* had broken the story in mid-May.

Nevertheless, Judge Souter's nomination has never been in serious trouble. Presidential choices for the bench in this century have been assured of approval unless the nominee is obviously racist, like G. Harrold Carswell; ethically tainted, as Clement Haynsworth was alleged to be; or grossly out of touch with mainstream beliefs, like Robert Bork. Beyond that, Souter's confirmation is secure because few senators seem able to ask probing follow-up questions. It's not an easy thing to do, especially with so facile a lawyer as Judge Souter. Moreover, the Democratic Party has failed abysmally to make an issue of the politics of judicial selection—a particularly regrettable missed opportunity, given the cynical bench-stacking game Reagan and Bush have played.

A saving democratic grace of the American system of judicial review is the selection of an electorally unaccountable judiciary by an electorally responsible Congress and President. To fulfill their roles in this constitutional design, the legislature and executive must know the views of the person who will be given a share of the Supreme Court's enormous power over the most intimate spheres of our lives, from the bedroom to the classroom. It is hard to believe that President Bush did not know what he was getting when he nominated David Souter. But after these hearings it is even harder to believe that the senators know what the Court is getting in Justice Souter.

Race and Rape

The sentences Judge Thomas Galligan imposed on the first three defendants in the Central Park jogger case were no surprise: five to ten years, the maximum for juveniles found guilty of rape and assault. But when William Kunstler called the trial a "legal lynching," when C. Vernon Mason described his new client, Antron McCray, as "an all-American hero," and when Yusef Salaam, one of the convicted youths, read a rap poem comparing himself to Malcolm X, the case became a full-fledged cause, with fundraising by the Rev. Al Sharpton and Louis Farrakhan. A real gender crime has been transformed into a phony race issue, and both antiracist politics and women will suffer.

From the beginning, this act of male hatred was discussed in almost every venue, by whites and by blacks, as an expression of race hatred or class anger, as a generational problem, a cultural question or, for purposes of titillation, a sex act—but not as a crime against women. During the trial the testimony centered on constitutional rights and forensic evidence; meanwhile, the rhetoric outside the courthouse, though violently misogynous, was shouted as if it were a cry for racial justice. The jogger was called a whore, prosecutor Elizabeth Lederer a devil bitch, but Sharpton's demonstrators insisted they were talking race, not gender. The use of white women as a weapon against black men became the issue, Scottsboro became the historical referent, and gang rape as a phenomenon, a method of control, disappeared.

How did this happen? The white media are responsible, first of all. New York's tabloid press and local television work from a presumption of guilt in any juicy crime, but the vocabulary so widely used for the Central Park attack was extraordinary: The kids were called animals, a wilding wolf pack, dark creatures of the night; the jogger was beatified. The "irony" that the accused were from relatively stable families, weren't on drugs and weren't dropouts was subtly turned to implicate all young black men as potential thugs. (The rape was atypical—rapists usually attack women of their own class and color.) A black outcry against such hysteria was inevitable and right.

But this outcry has been orchestrated by men who care less about the reality of the case than about its usefulness in strengthening their position in New York's fragmented black political structure. The black press initially raised many good questions: Were the defendants' rights violated during interrogation? Were they treated with care as juveniles? Why were none of them identified by any of that night's victims? Why didn't the DNA testing point to them, and why haven't the police found the one person whose DNA "print" was clearly seen? A case that depends entirely on the defendants' own statements (and on kids fingering one another) deserves most careful scrutiny.

A quintessentially Manhattan jury (an Asian, three Latinos, four blacks and four whites), which deliberated for ten days, was satisfied. Although some detectives seemed to be lying, and there were inconsistencies in the defendants' stories, the parents of the two boys who made videotaped statements had been present throughout their questioning, and no one claimed that they had been beaten or abused. The videos themselves were convincing, the language unrehearsed, gestures spontaneous, narratives full of unanticipated detail. Anyone who accepted the tapes had to convict.

The black press first played down the tapes, then ignored them and then—forced by a pro-defense momentum it had itself helped to create—started to promulgate theories that were unanswerable because they were absurd: The jogger went to the park to buy drugs, to sell herself, to meet a lover, to be sacrificed in a full-moon satanic ritual; she was never raped at all. If the Central Park defendants were to be made heroes by Sharpton, Mason and Farrakhan, they had to be not only the victims of unequal justice but innocent; not only innocent but accused of a crime that had never happened. Father Lawrence Lucas, a black priest active in the defense, told me, "The sexism here is in reverse. This gal Lederer is trying to up her career on the backs of innocent young black males, which is what this society is all about."

What mythology is being served here? Are we seeing a

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mirror image of the Tawana Brawley fraud? Both that "rape" and this "legal lynching" evoke historical truths so powerful they summon enormous rage: Black women have been raped and brutalized for hundreds of years by white men, and their stories have gone unheard; black men have been falsely accused of raping white women and have died for it. Properly manipulated, these truths override mere fact.

That the intent of such manipulation is not only to focus black anger but to undermine feminism is suggested by the recruitment of Tawana Brawley outside the courthouse, meekly praising a stepfather who stabbed his wife to death, and by the double victimization of the jogger. Instead of blaming the biases of black nationalist doctrine, however, it's worth noting that this sexism is a paradoxical variant of the way white society exploits or ignores rape victims. During eighteen months of screaming coverage, did the white press ever analyze why American juveniles, white and black, commit twice as much rape as they did fifteen years ago?

The second Central Park trial will begin October 11. Colin Moore, one of the defense attorneys, says he is going to cross-examine the jogger relentlessly. The defendants' supporters will try to make heroes and martyrs out of them. Such a campaign, framed in hatred and rooted in deceit, debases progressive dissent. It would be absurd, if the weakness of both the feminist and the antiracist movements in this country didn't allow it to be tragic. ERIKA MUNK

Erika Munk covered the jogger trial for The Village Voice.

Canadian Sunrise

When Canada's New Democratic Party takes office October 1, it will form the first democratic socialist government in Ontario's history and control the nation's wealthiest province. The September 6 election gave the N.D.P. seventy-four seats in the 130-seat legislature. The governing Liberal Party dropped from ninety-three to thirty-six seats while the Progressive Conservatives—governors of the province from 1943 to 1985—ended up with only twenty.

Like other historic upsets, the election produced a number of extraordinary events, the stuff of political mythology. Premier David Peterson lost his seat—which he had won in 1987 by a healthy 8,928 votes—to New Democrat Marion Boyd, coordinator of a battered women's clinic. Gary Malkowski of the Canadian Hearing Society became Ontario's first deaf parliamentarian. Upscale resort areas that had elected Liberals by enormous margins in the previous contest went New Democrat. The Ontario government, formerly a club for businesspeople and lawyers, will now be made up largely of social workers, feminists and laborers. The city of Kingston elected a library technician; one of Toronto's new representatives is a hospital porter. "When you sit down with the caucus . . . of this government you're sitting down with a group of people who are more like a coalition of different community interests . . . and not just your power elite," explains New Democrat Anne Swarbrick, who easily won a legislative seat.

The New Democrats have ambitious plans. They promise to create a nonprofit auto insurance system, eliminate the provincial income tax for those below the poverty line, impose a minimum tax on corporate profits (the N.D.P. claims that in 1990 an estimated 40,000 Ontario corporations paid no income tax at all), phase out the province's nuclear energy program, rewrite the pay-equity law to cover every woman in Ontario, strengthen rent control, establish 10,000 spaces for children in day care, and enact legislation that would jail corporate polluters. Swarbrick says that under an N.D.P. government, middle-income earners will not be "continuously laden with the full burden of taxes when corporations and the high-income earners have been getting off scot-free in many cases."

This agenda—and the fresh way it was presented—was attractive to Canadians who felt betrayed by the Conservative Party and angered at a Liberal Party that called an unnecessary summer election, cynically attempting to take advantage of its popularity before the probable onset of a recession.

With Ontario nailed down, the N.D.P. is looking at other provinces. In the recent Manitoba election the party came in a respectable second, moving from third place to become the official opposition. An election call in British Columbia, where the N.D.P. held power from 1972 to 1975, is imminent. Over the years the N.D.P. has formed governments in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and British Columbia; it currently runs the Yukon Territory. Those regional successes are causing pundits to look cautiously toward Ottawa. "If [party leader] Bob Rae and the N.D.P. can remain popular for two years—and it won't be easy—the N.D.P. might well form Canada's next national government," says Robert Penner of Greenpeace. According to *Toronto Star* columnist Michele Landsberg, the belief has always been that "if the N.D.P. could win Ontario, the country's financial heart, it could build a federal victory." GIDEON FORMAN

Gideon Forman was a full-time campaign organizer for the New Democratic Party in the recent Ontario election.

★

HELPING HAND

The Russians are in desperate need of bread.
But guess what we are selling them instead.
Well, RJR and Philip Morris folks
Are sending more than thirty billion smokes.
Yes, cigarettes, and cigarettes that lack
The Surgeon General's warning on the pack.
So could this mean (and this I would regret)
The cold war isn't really over yet?

Calvin Trillin

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BEAT THE DEVIL.

Red Harvest, Blue October?

Amid all the news stories about the Soviet economy going down the tubes, I met my old friend Lynn Turgeon, now retired from his post as professor of economics at Hofstra, who had just returned from a two-week trip to the Soviet Union, especially the Upper Volga. Turgeon has been going to the Soviet Union since 1966—eleven trips in all—and so has a pretty good comparative historical perspective.

"I think, contrary to all the dire reporting, that supplies—mainly food but also stuff in department stores—are better than they were four years ago," he told me. "I always collect farm market prices and have been doing so for a long time, and my hobby paid off this time. The increase in inflation is confined to Moscow and Leningrad, and outside those cities there was no increase in repressed inflation."

"What does this mean?"

"It means that the farmers' markets, the best measure we have for repressed inflation, do not show any heating up in the economy. Pork sells for five times as much in Moscow and Leningrad as it does in Voronezh, for example."

"And those stories of bread riots and scarcity?"

"I think they are largely manufactured, to drum up support for Shatalin's 500-day program to convert to a so-called market economy. There's a real symbiosis of interest between what I term the socialist bourgeoisie in Moscow and the Western reporters. The socialist bourgeoisie are hellbent on getting convertible rubles so they can pick up their VCRs and porno cassettes when they travel abroad. They are anxious for the yuppie life, and you can't have that without a convertible ruble. Most Russians don't travel and couldn't care less about convertibility. The Muscovite intelligentsia has a dreadful tendency to hysteria, leaping from one extreme to the other. The Western journalists are eager to snap up anything negative about the Soviet economy, so then it becomes self-perpetuating. The Russian socialist bourgeoisie produce stories of disaster; the Western journalists enlarge their significance, and then the Russians quote these Western stories in their debates in Moscow as evidence of the need for crisis action."

"All the same, what about the bread riots?"

"First of all, the CNN report only said white bread was in short supply. Russians prefer dark bread as a rule. I was in Moscow just about the same time and the only thing in short supply was cigarettes. A lot of these shortages stem from speculative buying; you get rid of that by rationing."

"What about the inability to harvest the bumper crop?"

"That's chronic. It doesn't alter the fact that this is the biggest crop in Russian history and, even if the usual amount is wasted, they should have a good year. There's a high correlation between Soviet growth and good crops."

"In other words, the existing economic program is doing better than is generally recognized?"

"Yes. The consumer goods output of the defense sector—in other words, their conversion program—increased by 22 percent in the first six months of this year."

"What do you think of the 500-day program of Shatalin?"

"It's entirely unnecessary and foolish besides. It's impossible to get instant results in any economy. Unfortunately the Gorbachev program was sold by Aganbegyan as *uskoreniye*, or 'acceleration,' and this hasn't materialized at the tempo predicted, though there has been progress. Shatalin's mania for privatization first of all faces the problem that there's no significant capital to privatize with, unless you sell the country to foreigners at bargain-basement prices. Secondly it overlooks the fact that privatization isn't even necessary for a healthy capitalism, as postwar Austria attests."

Footnote: I didn't see it in U.S. accounts, but the *Financial Times* for September 17 had a report from its Moscow correspondent, Quentin Peel, that the rather scrawny march of 30,000 to the Kremlin not only called for the resignation of Ryzhkov and his government but, upon reaching Pushkin Square, "where hundreds of people were queuing under umbrellas at the McDonald's restaurant, they also chanted 'Down with the capitalists of McDonald's,' suggesting a resentment of the growing western influence in Moscow."

Did the U.S. Want Iraq to Attack?

Looking at the record, or at least such portions of it as are available, it is plausible to argue that the Bush government would have been happy to have Iraq bully Kuwait to the extent of Saddam's exerting control over the Rumailah oilfield and the islands of Bubiyan and Warbah, sufficiently frightening Kuwait into stopping its overproduction of oil, thus raising the price. Maybe "happy" is too strong a word, but it's hard to put another construction on U.S. pre-invasion statements.

Aside from the simple virtue of getting the record straight, it is important to figure out what America was up to before the invasion so as to get a sense of what its negotiating posture might be, or could be, today.

In early September the Iraqis released their English translation—seventeen foolscap pages—of a July 25 session between Saddam and the U.S. Ambassador to Baghdad, April Glaspie. The State Department hasn't denounced it as a fake. It's not so much a conversation as a robust monologue by the Beast, mustering coherent arguments against Kuwait and stating his intention to do something to alter the distressing situation.

Saddam: "But when planned and deliberate policy forces the price of oil down without good commercial reasons then that means another war against Iraq. Because military war kills people by bleeding them. And economic war kills their humanity by depriving them of their chance to have a good standard of living. As you know, we gave rivers of blood in a war that lasted eight years, but we did not lose our humanity. Iraqis have a right to live proudly; we do not accept that anyone could injure Iraqi pride or the Iraqi right to have high standards of living." (This description of economic warfare closely echoes the bellicose prose of U.S. campus strategists like Robert Tucker in the early 1970s, who urged military strikes against the oil sheiks.)

Saddam returned again and again to the price of oil, at one point saying that $25 a barrel is "not a high price," to which Glaspie remarked, "We have many Americans who would like to see the price go above $25 because they come from oil pro-

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

ducing states." Then she stated that the United States had "no opinion on the Arab-Arab conflicts, like your border disagreement with Kuwait" and that "James Baker has directed our official spokesman to emphasize this."

As the session drew to a close Glaspie put the question plainly: "I received an instruction to ask you, in the spirit of friendship—not in the spirit of confrontation—regarding your intentions." Saddam responded by saying that Iraq wanted a just solution but that its patience was running out. By the weekend (July 28–29) he would meet the Kuwaitis again: "When we meet and when we see that there is hope, then nothing will happen. But if we are unable to find a solution, then it will be natural that Iraq will not accept death, even though wisdom is above everything else. There you have good news." In other words, Saddam hinted strongly at war and Glaspie was noncommittal, though friendly.

The following day *The Washington Post* carried a report on the gulf crisis by Patrick Tyler in which he reported that "some [White House, State *and* D.O.D.] officials asserted yesterday that an Iraqi attack on Kuwait would not draw a U.S. military response, but the United States would join in condemning such a move and would work diplomatically to force Iraq's withdrawal."

Five days later, after a weekend in which Kuwait refused to give ground on oil prices, Assistant Secretary of State John Kelly testified before the House Middle East subcommittee and was asked directly by Representative Lee Hamilton, "If there—if Iraq, for example, charged across the border into Kuwait and—for whatever reason—what would be our position with regard to the use of U.S. forces?"

Kelly responded that this was a hypothetical question.

Hamilton: " . . . it is correct to say, however, that we do not have a treaty commitment which would obligate us to engage U.S. forces there?"

Kelly: "That is correct."

A report of this exchange went out on the BBC World Service and was no doubt reviewed with pleasure by Saddam, who was about thirty hours away from invading.

Unless one espouses the conspiracy theory that the United States wanted Iraq to invade Kuwait as an excuse to crush Saddam, which I don't, then surely the simplest explanation is that the Bush Administration was trying to shove Kuwait into a more tractable posture with regard to the price of oil and possibly to the leasing of the two islands so desired by Iraq for the construction of a deep harbor in the gulf. Iraq, after all, was a U.S. ally and already a serious trading partner. Nor would the Administration, strongly oriented to the oil lobby, have been at all averse to seeing a hike in prices, which had drifted in real terms below their 1973 level. By seizing the whole of Kuwait, Saddam overplayed the hand allowed by the United States. The oil price went up, but the skies fell in. Secretary of State and Texan James Baker, croupier in the high-stakes game, dropped out of sight for three weeks.

Given this interpretation, it follows that Bush should have no a priori problem with Iraq's negotiating proposals of August 23, offering withdrawal in return for guaranteed access to the gulf and control of the Rumailah oilfield.

The Left and the Crisis

With the slogan "U.S. Out of the Gulf" certain left groups here are threatening to get themselves into a tricky position, not so much for what the slogan says as for what it doesn't say, about Iraq's invasion and annexation of Kuwait and about the collective international response.

Honest people, not only on the left, justly burn at the double standard operating with respect to Iraq's land grabs and those of the United States, Indonesia, Turkey, Israel, etc. They can remember the imperial carve-up of the region and the skulduggery of Sykes-Picot; can deplore the imperial obsession with control of oil supplies; can fear renewal of Western military occupation of the region. But that does not dispel the brutal illegality of Saddam's annexation and, behind it, the monstrosity of his regime. Saddam's is vastly worse than the rule of the corrupt emirs who once fawned on him as the bulwark against Iran, and who now call for his death. He sacrificed 400,000 Iraqi and 600,000 Iranian lives in the war against Iran and he has now brought misery and ruin upon hundreds of thousands of poor people around the Persian Gulf, many of them Palestinians who have nowhere to go.

Double standards in the application of U.N. decisions in the past do not alter the fact that the U.N. has acted appropriately now. Leftists who have spent the past few decades denouncing the illegality of acquisition of territory by force or the threat of force should be cautious in any newfound contempt for the legitimacy of national boundaries or for the value of the United Nations. They should see Bush's enthusiasm for the U.N. as opportunistic but also as at least a remote opportunity. Application of U.N. principles in the Persian Gulf makes a stronger case for their application in the West Bank, Gaza, the Golan and elsewhere.

Indeed, the U.N. should be central to the strategy of those fearful of unilateral U.S. adventurism, short- or long-term. The call should now be for the conversion of the forces confronting Iraq in the region into a genuinely multilateral force—with diminished U.S. presence—under a genuine U.N. command. Senator Terry Sanford has been pressing for a U.N. lead in resolving the crisis and the multilateralization of forces, as against unilateral U.S. action and continued buildup, and this is a decent position.

In the present circumstance, the U.S.-dominated forces cannot be expected to remain inactive for long. The embargo will begin to erode, troops get increasingly restive and voters back home correspondingly critical. Pressure for an attack will grow and war will break out. The other two options are for de facto acceptance of Iraq's annexation, which is impossible, or negotiation, which is therefore the only sensible option to pursue. Plans have been floated by Iraq, the P.L.O., Jordan and others which are serious. Negotiations are what opponents of Bush's hijacking of the crisis should be urging rather than the simple slogan "U.S. Out of the Gulf," which begs far more questions than it answers.

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WATCHING RIGHTS.

ARYEH NEIER

In 1985, when the Reagan Administration could not quite get Congress to go along with "lethal" aid to the *contras*, overt U.S. support for these combatants was transformed into "humanitarian" aid. A Nicaraguan Humanitarian Assistance Office was established in the State Department to administer this aid, which consisted of just about everything but guns and bullets, including vehicles for their transportation. (The guns and bullets, as was widely suspected long before it was proved, were distributed by the C.I.A.)

Now the word "humanitarian" has come up again. This time the shoe is on the other foot, as the Bush Administration wants it interpreted as narrowly as possible. Governments that propose to ship food and medicine to Iraq have been denounced for breaking the embargo. At Helsinki, Presidents Bush and Gorbachev issued a statement recognizing that food could be shipped to Iraq for humanitarian purposes, but Bush attempted to put a spin on this at their joint press conference. "I hope that nobody around the world interprets this as our view that now there should be wholesale food shipments to Iraq," he said. "This should not be from the U.S. standpoint interpreted as a wholesale big—big hole in this embargo."

The resolution by the U.N. Security Council imposing the trade embargo made explicit exemptions for "supplies intended strictly for medical purposes, and, in humanitarian circumstances, foodstuffs." Under international law, the resolution is binding on all nations. It is also in keeping with "international humanitarian law," the international agreements that regulate the conduct of wars and occupations, such as the Geneva Conventions. Even when fighting is under way, international humanitarian law provides that "starvation of civilians as a method of warfare is prohibited," and asserts that the opposing sides must "allow the free passage of all consignments of medical and hospital stores . . . intended only for civilians."

Saddam Hussein has compiled his own long record of violations of international humanitarian law, many not denounced by the United States while they were being committed, or denounced halfheartedly because our government favored Iraq in the long and incredibly bloody war it launched against Iran. Iraq used poison gas intermittently from 1983 to 1988 against Iranian troops. It bombed and rocketed the civilians in Iran's cities (Iran did the same to civilians in Iraq's cities). In 1988, Iraqi planes attacked Kurdish villages with poison gas. Since 1985 half a million Kurds have been forcibly resettled by Iraq, and their villages have been dynamited. Yet in this period the United States was cultivating improved relations with Iraq, providing billions of dollars of loan guarantees through such agencies as the Commodity Credit Corporation (C.C.C.) and the Export-Import Bank. In 1989 the Bush Administration doubled the C.C.C. program for Iraq to a level exceeding $1 billion for the year.

In the current conflict Saddam has violated international humanitarian law by holding foreigners as hostages, by transferring some of them from occupied Kuwait to Iraq and by deploying them as human shields. Middle East Watch—which has published reports on the application of international humanitarian law to the current conflict and on the conduct of Iraqi troops in Kuwait—has reported that the Iraqi army "has seized control of some hospitals in Kuwait, giving priority to Iraqi patients, and in some cases sending home Kuwaitis in need of continued care"; has fired on peaceful demonstrators opposing the occupation; and has fired on refugees fleeing the country. Iraq has reportedly made the hostages suffer particularly from shortages of food by denying them ration cards. This too violates international humanitarian law, even if the shortages result from violations of the rights of Iraqi citizens by the United States and its allies.

The principle that one side's abuses do not excuse abuses by the other side is crucial. The obligation to abide by the rules of international humanitarian law is absolute for each party to a conflict, independent of compliance by other parties. For this reason alone, the United States warrants condemnation for attempting to enforce the embargo in a manner that creates shortages of food and medicine. That U.S. action is also both foolish and morally wrong.

It is foolish to blockade food and medicine in the hope of creating so much hardship that Iraqis will rise up and overthrow Saddam. The prospect that this might happen is vanishingly remote in a country where state control is so pervasive and the reprisals for dissent are so swift and dire. Moreover, Saddam showed during the Iraq-Iran war that he can tolerate the infliction of great misery on the Iraqi people. If he yields, it will be for other reasons.

It is wrong because those who suffer will be Iraqi (and also Kuwaiti) civilians. The rule of international humanitarian law that those not actually engaged in combat should be protected from harm to the extent that this is possible expresses an essential principle of civilized behavior.

The International Committee of the Red Cross proposed to bring food and medicine to Iraq in exchange for I.C.R.C. access to Westerners and to Kuwaiti prisoners held by Iraq. The I.C.R.C.'s eagerness to assist civilians on both sides is appropriate, but Iraq had a point in one of its stated reasons for rejecting the deal: Since delivery of food and medicine is a humanitarian question, it should not be subject to conditions. The other stated reason—that the deal would have acknowledged a state of war—is not persuasive because, as the I.C.R.C. president pointed out, "even in the absence of an armed conflict, the [Geneva] conventions' humanitarian dispositions towards civilian populations stand."

A *New York Times* editorial on September 15 denounced Saddam Hussein's "use of food as a weapon against innocent foreigners." Quite right. But why no outrage about the use of food as a weapon against Iraqi and Kuwaiti civilians?

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ARTICLES.

JUSTICE WATCH

Executioners' Songs

DIANA R. GORDON

Election-year crime packages have become a staple in the Congressional pantry, and 1990 is no exception. On July 11 the Senate overwhelmingly passed (94 to 6) the Omnibus Crime Control Act, which Senator Joseph Biden called "the toughest, most comprehensive crime bill in our history." Debate on the House version, the Comprehensive Crime Control Act, was postponed by the budget impasse as this issue went to press. It had already drawn fire from Attorney General Dick Thornburgh for its "pro-criminal provisions."

Although the omnibus bills in the Senate and House are similar in some respects—both increase the number of federal capital crimes, limit the right to challenge the constitutionality of a death sentence or the way it is obtained, and punish savings and loan fraud—they take very different positions on expanding the federal death penalty and expediting its application. Just how conference-committee negotiations will resolve these differences before Congress adjourns this month is unclear. The one thing that seems very likely is that members will have a new federal death penalty on the books to bolster their fall campaigns.

Death penalty politics is more than a scuffle over whether a minuscule number of murderers will be executed by the federal government in the foreseeable future. (Biden has predicted that the Senate provisions would lead to fewer than a dozen such executions in a decade.) The apparently irresistible appeal of running for office on the death penalty issue is threatening to cripple the enforcement of constitutional rights. The conference committee may well adopt the Senate bill's provisions that restrict the use of habeas corpus to challenge the constitutionality of death-row detention and that refuse to overrule recent Supreme Court decisions that strip the federal courts of their ability to use the habeas process as a vehicle for developing rights. If this happens it will send a message to state criminal justice systems that their actions in criminal cases—noncapital as well as capital—will rarely be held accountable to the Constitution.

This year's embrace in both houses of a federal death penalty is the culmination of more than a decade of struggle over the issue. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, as many states restored capital punishment by correcting the constitutional defects of old laws invalidated by the Supreme Court in 1972, House Judiciary Committee liberals blocked federal death penalty bills that had passed in the Senate. (Capital punishment for hijackings that result in death has been on the books since 1974 but has never been invoked.) Then in 1988 Congress passed the Anti-Drug Abuse Act, allowing the death penalty in drug-related killings. (No one has been sentenced under the law, although an alleged Chicago drug lord has been indicted for ordering the murder of an associate.) This year, continuing popular support for capital punishment, a spate of killings of innocent bystanders and the national preoccupation with the drug problem have made it too politically risky for Democrats in either house to resist acquiescing in demands for what its proponents like to call "the ultimate sanction."

The Senate bill goes all out. It creates more than thirty federal capital crimes, including the sale of "controlled substances" by a "drug kingpin" who operates "as part of a continuing criminal enterprise," whether or not death results. The legislation also displays considerable relish for symbolic gestures: Terrorist murder would become a capital crime, even though there hasn't been one in this country for many years; so would bank robbery resulting in death, even though the federal government is not in the business of prosecuting bank robberies. The original House bill, reflecting the continuing reluctance of Judiciary Committee liberals to get the federal government into the business of execution, limits itself to about ten offenses, mostly varieties of murder.

Among the provisions at stake in the Senate-House maneuverings, "reform" of federal habeas corpus laws in capital cases appears to be the watershed issue. How it comes out will tell us a good deal about whether our principal policy-makers care as much about curbing abuses of official

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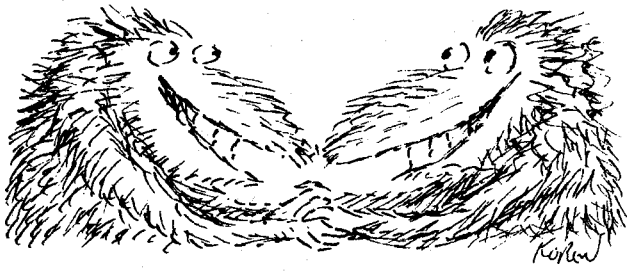

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power as they do about going on record as crime fighters.

Habeas corpus originated in Magna Carta and was guaranteed in the Constitution even before the Bill of Rights was added. First called the Great Writ by Chief Justice John Marshall, it challenges government deprivation of physical liberty and life, giving prisoners the right to question the constitutionality of the proceedings that convicted and sentenced them. Since shortly after the Civil War it has allowed state as well as federal inmates to assert their rights in the forum most likely to honor them, the federal courts. Whether the prosecutor suppressed evidence favorable to the defense, or the jury pool excluded blacks and women or the defense attorney referred to the client in court as a "nigger," the avenue of recourse has been a federal habeas corpus petition.

Congressional conservatives, prosecutors and the Reagan and Bush administrations have long asserted that death-row prisoners abuse habeas corpus by raising frivolous claims after an execution date has been set "to dodge society's verdict," as Thornburgh put it recently. They maintain that this abuse creates inefficiency which undermines public confidence in our criminal justice system. This message often thinly veils a desire for speedy execution for its own sake. Pennsylvania Attorney General Ernest Preate expressed typical impatience in June testimony before the House subcommittee on courts: "Our complex legal machinery stands in the way of the imposition of the death penalty when validly imposed. Unnecessary delays and countless reviews frustrate the will of the majority. These delays and reviews must be reduced if the death penalty is to be a viable deterrent."

Such delays are often at the state level, however, and have nothing to do with the federal habeas corpus procedure. They also arise from the difficulties in recruiting lawyers (usually unpaid) to bring constitutional challenges in federal courts and the enormous problems in preparing such challenges. "A capital case often comes from the state system in such a mess that it takes months for a newly appointed lawyer to untangle it and then proceed officially with the litigation," says George Kendall, associate counsel at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund, which has represented hundreds of indigent capital defendants throughout its fifty-year history. And the "countless reviews" are in large part necessary to uncover the many constitutional defects that would otherwise slip by. The American Bar Association Task Force on Death Penalty Habeas Corpus found constitutional error in 40 percent of the capital cases reviewed by federal courts over a fifteen-year period.

Nevertheless, reducing delay in capital punishment by speeding up or whittling away the habeas process has become a crusade for Chief Justice William Rehnquist, who calls it "a serious malfunction in our legal system." A chief justice's involvement in the business of the legislative branch is usually limited, by tradition and the principle of the separation of powers, to proposals for streamlining court procedure or lightening the courts' workload, and has rarely included lobbying to curb citizens' exercise of basic rights. But Rehnquist broke with this practice. In June 1988 he created an ad hoc committee of the U.S. Judicial Con-

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ference, the twenty-six-member policy-making body for the federal judiciary, and charged it to develop legislation that would speed up executions. The committee was headed by former Supreme Court Justice Louis Powell and made up of judges from the two Southern "death circuits," where more than three-quarters of the executions since 1976 have taken place. Congress then prodded the chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee to proceed by stipulating in the Anti-Drug Abuse Act that habeas reform legislation must be introduced within forty-five days of receipt of the Powell Committee's report.

In September 1989 the Powell Committee's proposal was ready. It recommended, among other things, that federal habeas petitions must be filed within six months of a capital sentence and that prisoners be limited to one petition in most situations. In an extraordinary burst of extrajudicial activism, Rehnquist transmitted the report to Congress despite a decision by the Judicial Conference two days earlier to postpone consideration of it until the following spring.

Many of the judges of the conference were in high dudgeon, seeing the action as an effort to advance the Chief Justice's conservative agenda without resistance from senior federal judges in the conference, a group that has not yet been infiltrated by the shock troops of the judicial revolution begun by Ronald Reagan. Fourteen of them, including chief judges of eight of the thirteen federal circuits, dropped their usual professional shields of privacy and autonomy to sign a letter requesting that both houses of Congress hold hearings that would include Judicial Conference views other than those of the Powell Committee. Furthermore, the conference later refused to endorse the Powell Committee proposal unless substantial modifications were made.

What finally emerged from the Senate battle over habeas corpus would, in some respects, curb the Great Writ even more than the Powell Committee's recommendations. Judiciary Committee chair Biden's determination to wipe out the Democrats' wimps-on-crime image may have encouraged floor amendments that sound the death knell on an effective habeas process. Horse trading between Senators Arlen Specter and Strom Thurmond produced a sixty-day statute of limitations for habeas petitions, far too short a time for lawyers to prepare their claims. Brief time limits for considering petitions were also imposed on federal judges, even at the Supreme Court level. Those provisions would surely make it even more difficult to recruit lawyers to take capital appeals, and they would also discourage judges from hearing them, presumably an outcome contemplated by their sponsors. Leslie Harris, legislative counsel of the American Civil Liberties Union, attributes the harsh Senate provisions to the timing of the crime bill; rewriting it in the public eye in an election year "becomes a free-for-all, a bidding war; everyone treated the habeas corpus issue like it was a free vote."

The original House bill contained essential protections for procedural fairness in capital cases. Particularly vulnerable to attack by Thornburgh & Co. were the provisions that prohibit capital sentences imposed on the basis of the race of the defendant or the victim, a conclusion to be drawn when

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the state cannot show a nondiscriminatory basis for a statistical pattern of capital sentences imposed disproportionately on members of one race or on those whose victims are of one race. The Senate had defeated a similar provision, 58 to 38, with Senator Bob Graham leading the charge by arguing, in effect, that it would keep the states from doing what needs to be done. (Presumably he knows whereof he speaks; his years of signing death warrants as Governor of Florida undoubtedly brought home to him the pervasive racial bias in capital punishment.)

Another important issue is the "retroactivity bar." In a recent series of cases the Supreme Court ruled that federal courts may not grant relief to a habeas petitioner if it would mean recognizing a "new rule" (broadly defined to mean anything the state court would not have felt compelled to follow) or applying a rule developed after the petitioner's sentence became final. Thus, a black prisoner whose trial had systematically excluded black jurors could not benefit from a new rule that such exclusion denied defendants equal protection of the laws. (The retroactivity bar would also have prevented the recognition of defendants' rights in such important cases as *Mapp v. Ohio*, which established the right to counsel.) The House bill unequivocally repudiates the retroactivity bar. An ambiguous measure in the Senate bill stipulates that a judge reviewing a habeas petition "shall consider intervening decisions by the Supreme Court of the United States which establish fundamental constitutional rights."

Last spring, testifying before the House subcommittee on courts, Chief Judge James Oakes of the Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit said, "Inadequate representation is, without a doubt, the most significant problem in capital litigation today." While indigent defendants have a right to competent counsel at trial and on direct appeal, no such right exists at the state level for constitutional challenges, even in capital cases; and a state that chooses to provide a lawyer need not insure competence or provide adequate pay. The Senate bill mandates counsel for all stages of capital litigation, but the original bill before the House went further and set specific competence standards for attorneys. It also called for setting up in each state with a death penalty an organization that would appoint lawyers and set standards for compensation and performance. Larry Yackle, an expert on habeas corpus at Boston University Law School, called those provisions "by far the best habeas corpus initiative in either chamber in a long time" and noted that similar standards for counsel were adopted by the American Bar Association last year and by the Judicial Conference when it overrode the Powell Committee recommendations.

Unfortunately, however, the precedent of the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 suggests that a blatantly political floor fight may gut those provisions of the House bill. The drug legislation was, according to New Jersey Representative William Hughes, "butchered" by Republican amendments attached to it on the floor after it came out of Hughes's subcommittee on crime. Democrats, fearful of repudiation at the polls if they didn't go along, then helped to pass it overwhelmingly. In 1988 the horse to ride was drug penalties; this year it's the death penalty. And to the get-tough jockeys anything that makes capital litigation fairer looks like muck on the race track.

It becomes increasingly clear that these days conservative quarrels with criminal procedure are really challenges to the underlying rights it protects. Delay is the ostensible evil of the habeas corpus process, but the conservatives' real villain is access to the federal courts for murderers, assassins or drug lords, who can then complain of their treatment by states that are unable or unwilling to comply with the Constitution. The Bush Administration, the Powell Committee and the Chief Justice are aiming for no less than federal court-stripping. Although not as blatant as the efforts of Senator Jesse Helms in the 1970s to deprive federal courts of jurisdiction over issues like busing, abortion and school prayer, the outcome of the habeas provisions approved by the Senate would be the same: Decisions on constitutional matters would be left to the state courts, where the conservative social agenda is alive and well. It remains to be seen whether enough Congressional leaders and followers are alert to the threat and are willing to repel it. □

SERBO-CROATIAN STRIFE

Is Yugoslavia Cracking Up?

SLAVENKA DRAKULIĆ

Zagreb, Yugoslavia

I always feel uneasy when I see news about my country in the foreign press. I know it usually means bad news. But the fact is that this time the situation really is dangerous, and it has been obscured because of the Persian Gulf crisis. What the world wants at this moment is certainly not a troubled Europe—and what Europe wants is certainly not a civil war in its southeastern part.

That is why the extreme nationalist tension between Serbs and Croats should not be neglected. Such a conflict would not be "only" a civil war between Croatia and Serbia, which might be considered a minor problem on a world, or even a European, scale but a war engulfing the entire Balkan Peninsula. The question of Istria would immediately involve Italy, the struggle over Macedonia would pull in the Bulgarians and Greeks, and Albania would attempt to annex Kosovo—to name just the countries that are directly involved. Ethnic strife in Yugoslavia would also exacerbate nationalist, conservative and totalitarian tendencies in the rest of Europe. Most important, it would reopen the question of borders and spheres of interest in Europe.

The problem is that the war has already started, and the world will have to deal with it sooner or later. How else is one supposed to characterize the events of the weekend of August 17-19, when hundreds of Serbs armed with auto-

Slavenka Drakulić is a Yugoslav journalist and novelist. She is currently writing a book, How We All Survived Communism, *to be published by Norton in September 1991.*

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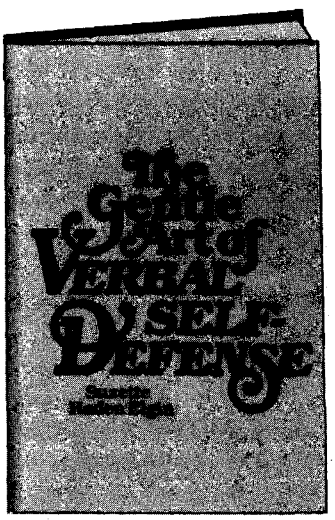

About the Author

Psycholinguist Suzette Haden Elgin has presented her innovative self-defense principles in a variety of formats. She has given workshops and seminars all over the U.S., including verbal self-defense sessions for doctors, lawyers, and other professionals. Dr. Elgin has also created a self-defense tape and a training manual for people who teach her self-defense techniques.

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matic rifles, pistols and homemade grenades sealed off main roads? Or when 2,000 women and children, members of the Serbian minority, fled the town of Knin in southwestern Croatia in anticipation of a bloody clash with the Croat militia? Or when the citizens of Knin blockaded their own town, stealing their arms from the local militia station? Hundreds of thousands of tourists have left the country out of fear of civil war, traveling as many as thirty hours from the coast to the Austrian border, only to discover a six-mile-long waiting line to get across it. This tourist exodus will cost an estimated $1 billion, but if this were the only price to pay, we should all be happy. I am afraid that this may be only the beginning.

Discussing only the rights of Serbs or Croats (or any other ethnic group) is a step backward that leads to the suspension of democracy before it is even solidly established.

The problem of 500,000 ethnic Serbs living among 4.6 million Croats in Croatia has been simmering for the past couple of months, especially since the Croatian Democratic Union took office following free elections in the republic in April (except for Slovenia's elections in the same month, those were the first free elections to have been held in Yugoslavia since World War II). Some tension was to be expected, because the new government is clearly nationalist and close to the Catholic church (Serbs are Eastern Orthodox). But it is one thing to feel estranged by a new Constitution that defines Croatia as the state of the Croats and "other minorities." It is quite another for Serbs to sow fear deliberately, to form a separate Parliament and National Council—in fact, a parallel government in Croatia—and to threaten an uprising. The truth is, there are right-wing hawks in the Croatian leadership who would like to strip Serbs of their rights, even send them all back to Serbia, and they are putting strong pressure on the President. But at the same time, Serbian parties have legal representatives in the Parliament, and the Croatian government has offered the position of vice president of the republic to a Serb. The offer has been refused. The seat is still empty.

That weekend in August was the beginning of a "referendum on autonomy" in Knin, the Serb-dominated southwestern part of Croatia. The Croatian government warned that this referendum was unconstitutional and illegal, and even the president of the strongest opposition party, the former Communists, called it "an armed uprising against a legal government." Paradoxically, what is going on is that the minority is openly challenging the majority, using arms. The Croatian government has not reacted as most Serbs expected. It did not prevent them from holding their illegal referendum because it was aware that sending in the militia would mean a bloodbath. Whatever kind of autonomy Serbs really want, whether it is cultural (which no one is denying them) or political, there are other means—civil disobedience, petitions, parliamentary procedures and so on—that have not been exhausted. One does not take up arms first, threatening war—except, perhaps, in the Balkans. This reduces "dialogue" between Croats and Serbs to the level of tribalism. Excluding the rights of citizens and discussing only the rights of Serbs or Croats (or any other ethnic group) is a step backward that leads to the suspension of democracy before it is even solidly established.

It is unlikely that the Serbs in Croatia would dare to challenge power directly if they were not sure that the Republic of Serbia could "help." Indeed, people in Serbia are now forming volunteer brigades to free Serbs in neighboring Croatia, even though the federal government has declared that this is against the law. The Serbian government, whose President is Slobodan Milosevic, wrote a letter to the federal government demanding an end to the "violation of human rights" of Serbs in Croatia. This was an interesting letter, in light of the case of Kosovo, an "autonomous" province whose population is 90 percent Albanian. Milosevic recently suspended Kosovo's provincial Parliament and shut down the only Albanian-language daily newspaper, claiming that the question of the Albanian community is strictly in the domain of Serbia, and "solving" it—as the whole world knows—through an army occupation.

The real question is why the federal army didn't intervene in Croatia to prevent bloodshed and disarm the Serbs. If, as Croatian President Franjo Tudjman claims, the referendum is an organized attempt to destabilize the Croatian government, was it not the army's duty to protect it? Or, at least, to publicly take the government's side, rather than using aircraft to intercept three Croatian police helicopters on their way to the area of the uprising? On the other hand, Serbs from Croatia asked for army "help" before the referendum began. Helping them could mean only one thing, an attempt to overthrow the government of Croatia—in other words, a military coup.

Even if the army has taken no action yet, a military coup on the pretext of preventing civil war and the breakup of Yugoslavia cannot be ruled out yet. An army intervention has been viewed, both domestically and abroad, as a potential solution to the current political crisis in Yugoslavia. But the army's actions might be influenced by the fact that it is not yet depoliticized—98 percent of the officer corps are members of the reconstituted Communist Party—and that 80 percent of the officers are Serbs. Besides, the army is itself fractured by ethnic rifts. A coup might temporarily suppress nationalist tension, but it would ruin an already ailing economy and destroy the nascent multiparty democracy—not to mention being an anachronism in today's Europe. Because the army is not a monolithic institution standing above society, there is no guarantee that this scenario (plausible though it might look to, for example, the Bush Administration) would really prevent the disintegration of Yugoslavia.

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Assuming that the unity of Yugoslavia is necessary at all, it cannot be secured by a military coup or by pressure from other countries. This would result in a kind of police state, holding people together for the "higher purpose" of preserving the peace. In order to guarantee long-term peace, only a higher form of democratic integration and the recognition of common interests should keep these nations together. Yugoslavia does not need military intervention of any kind, not even by United Nations forces. What it needs are free elections in the other four republics, mutually satisfactory agreements between the republican governments, money and time. And in precisely that order. For the time being, I am afraid, any other solution would be a dangerous fiction. □

COUNTRY-CLUB SEGS

The White Man's Last Stand

DIANE McWHORTER

Before the fairways fade to drab, let us now praise famous Alabama men once again. The newest addition to the state's racial rogues' gallery, this year's Bull Connor, is a Birmingham golf-course maven named Hall Thompson, who refused to be pressured into admitting blacks to the country club he built. Soon after he thus gallantly declared in June, his club underwent emergency desegregation to spare the Professional Golfers' Association Championship, held there in August, from PR calamity. Someday, though, the host of this Keystone Kops expiation drama, Shoal Creek country club, will take a hallowed place in history beside Birmingham's great civil rights landmark, Kelly Ingram Park, scene of the police-dogs-and-firehoses demonstrations that brought us the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Most people I know have missed the true significance of Shoal Creek. A fellow Birmingham expatriate, from the steel-mill side of town, pooh-poohed its token integration (and consequently that of any other club hoping to hold a major golf tournament) as akin to telling Martin Luther King Jr. he could sit in the middle of the bus. But as a product of Birmingham's country-club-densest valley, over which a euphoric sense of inclusion hung like a state of grace, I find it momentous—not so much a blow for civil rights (Shoal Creek's $35,000 initiation fee sort of moots that) but a radical assault on the elitist consensus that runs the business of America. Suddenly it seems as incredible as it used to be matter-of-fact that these sacred white male councils—not to mention the greens of professional golf—were exempted from the pieties that have been integral to national law for twenty-six years. The reformation happened now only because it happened there, in my hometown, the national warehouse for the white man's burden.

The fellows on the Big Board once looked South, beheld redneck dictators sicking dogs on black children, and wondered at the regional barbarians. Today they are seeing one of their golfing buddies, whose only sin was to exercise the "discretion" that any country club in the world reserves. In protest, the Southern Christian Leadership Conference threatened to return to Birmingham twenty-seven years after its triumphant demonstrations of 1963. But this time their goal was not to sit at a counter with the white hotdog-for-lunch crowd but to break into America's most exclusive winner's circle. To that extent Shoal Creek is a civil rights milestone: affirmation that not only do blacks have rights, they also deserve privileges.

Country-club men across the land, though not eager to share their caddies with "just anybody," feared that Hall Thompson's remarks might publicly tar them with racism—even if they did not have an equivalent terror of actually being racist. How else to explain the hypocrisy of I.B.M.'s top management, who did not protest discriminatory clubs until their genteel snobbery became linked with Birmingham's racist demonology? Worried about the economic liability of bigotry, I.B.M. pulled its TV ads from the P.G.A. Championship at Shoal Creek.

During the tournament, however, a friendly spectator asked Thompson what clubs he figured the head of I.B.M. belonged to. "Why, he's a member of the Augusta National with me," Thompson reportedly said. That ultra-rarefied Georgia Valhalla for the nation's C.E.O.s was white-only until suddenly, amid the Shoal Creek stink, it found a qualified black and admitted him on September 7—in plenty of time to deflect heat from the prestigious, corporate-blessed Masters tournament held at the club every April. Executives at I.B.M. refused to be interviewed. "Such membership is personal," said a spokesperson.

The 300-member Augusta National is the spiritual descendant of Georgia's old Jekyll Island Club, founded in 1886 as a winter haven for J.P. Morgan, William Vanderbilt, Joseph Pulitzer and fifty other industrial suzerains. In Birmingham the connection between country clubs and capitalism is equally vivid. The City of Payrolls, as it was once known, was chartered as an "El Dorado of the iron masters," and its country clubs were created to serve an upstart industrial aristocracy. When New Deal "government interference" and unionism encroached on their heavy-manufacturing paradise (although not before an eminent clubman shot some labor organizers dead), the local industrialists began furiously to cultivate the country club as a last oasis of self-determination. Struck by the city's country-club obsession, the liberal Southern journalist Jonathan Daniels observed in 1937 that "persons who are fortunate enough to belong to the Mountain Brook Club . . . do not let the hour pass without somehow allowing the news to escape." As Mountain Brook Club men sometimes pointed out, the difference between the Birmingham Country Club and their own was the difference between Kiwanis and Rotary. Kiwanis ran the city; Rotary owned it.

By the time I was growing up in the 1960s, the country-

Diane McWhorter is writing a civil rights history of her native Birmingham.

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club mystique had so permeated Birmingham's imperial suburb of Mountain Brook (waggishly nicknamed the "tiny kingdom") that children, already aware of a country-club hierarchy, would competitively ask one another, "What pool do you belong to?" A freakishly liberal (Yankee-bred) mayor of Mountain Brook once proposed building some public tennis courts and a swimming pool for the estimated 90 percent of his constituents who were outside the magic club circle. Indignant, the City Council members retorted, "We've got two country clubs!"

Hall Thompson, a retired tractor-dealer-cum-city-father, is what passes for an industrialist in postindustrial Birmingham. Some of his fellow Mountain Brook Club members considered it sort of tacky when he hired Jack Nicklaus to design a golf course for his new Shoal Creek country club in 1977, just off the beaten path of white flight south of Birmingham. Ever since his futile fight to keep blacks out of the Rotary Club several years ago, Thompson has guarded Shoal Creek with an "it's my store and no one's going to tell me how to run it" stubbornness that would have done the old-time foundrymen proud. Admirably, however, he has opened his club to Jews, Italians, women and even plaintiff lawyers. This defied a WASP male country-club tradition so inviolable that when the Mountain Brook Club admitted a prominent Jewish citizen (and investor) named Hugo Marx sixty years ago, he faithfully paid his dues every year but never set foot in the clubhouse.

Secure in the moral advantage of Shoal Creek's ethnic diversity, Thompson reputedly rebuffed a P.G.A. Championship co-chair who begged him to let an official spokesperson handle any questions from the press about club admissions, and he expounded on his liberal policies to a *Birmingham Post-Herald* reporter named Joan Mazzolini: "I think we've said that we don't discriminate in every other area except the blacks." Situational morality at the top will never be quite the same.

Some of Birmingham's weary white martyrs have tried to blame the Shoal Creek crisis on Mazzolini, calling her a Yankee who came to the South to make a name for herself. But on the whole, except for the publicly unrepentant Thompson, Birmingham's country-club set, ready with japes about "Soul Creek, the club for discriminating members," have taken the fall for their national peers with some dignity. The president of a local gas company resigned from the Birmingham Country Club in protest against its all-white membership, after which the club sent a letter to members stating tolerance for guests of all stripes. The waiters at the Mountain Brook Club have been informed, as if *they* might be offended, that their fellow African-Americans will soon be dining there as guests. The old country-club friends I ran into at the P.G.A. Championship, knowing me to be an aficionado of Birmingham's racial "troubles," asked without the least defensiveness, "Are you here because of . . . ?"

Faith precedes correct action, according to the religion of the Christians who fill the "best" country-club rosters, but in bastions of the status quo the right thing is almost always done for amoral, self-serving reasons. It was only after the P.G.A. threatened to pull out of Shoal Creek less than two weeks before the championship that Louis Willie Jr., a business mogul (and white Birmingham's favorite token black), received his honorary (nonvoting) club membership. Economic motives for such righteous capitulation are easier to claim than moral ones in certain superior circles, where "nigger lover" remains a worse label than "racist." Indeed, at least two country clubs, both outside the South, have withdrawn from the tournament circuit rather than comply with the P.G.A.'s new egalitarian guidelines.

Power yields only what it must in order to preserve itself. Right now, that means Federal Judge Joel Dubina, our golfing President's recent nominee to replace the late Robert Vance (killed by a mail bomb at his Mountain Brook home last December) on the Court of Appeals for the Eleventh Circuit, felt he had to resign from the Montgomery Country Club, but did not discourage his wife from accepting a membership, apparently created for judges' wives to get around the club's ban on married women members. But maybe in some future generation, if enough country-club children share their swimming pools with enough token blacks—in a commingling of the races that Bull Connor once said would cause blood to run in the streets—racial equality will be more than just a dog-and-pony show. □

THE PEACE MOVEMENT NOW—II

Antiwar Means Pro-Democracy

RANDY KEHLER

As longtime social critic and peace advocate W.H. Ferry has often reminded us, there *is* no peace movement in this country and there never has been. Yes, says Ferry, we've often had an antiwar movement, or an anti-intervention movement, or a disarmament movement—each focused on a particular war, military intervention or type of weapon—and, Ferry would add, we've often had damn good ones. But we've never had a popular movement that was talking about *peace*, about something more than stopping war or some aspect of it.

With the impending calamity in the Persian Gulf, that appraisal of the peace movement is likely to hold. Because many of us feel compelled to put aside or slow the pace of long-term work for structural change while we address the immediate crisis, we find ourselves about to repeat the history of the peace movement once again. What follows is a plea that in the course of fighting the present fire we not abandon our efforts to create fire-resistant structures for the future.

For peace activists, transcending our history requires that

Randy Kehler, a former national coordinator of the Nuclear Weapons Freeze Campaign and currently co-director of the Working Group On Electoral Democracy, contributes the third article in this series.

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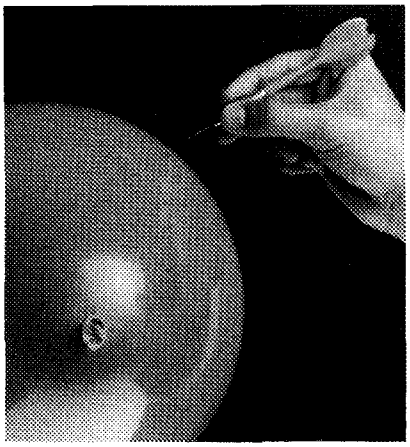

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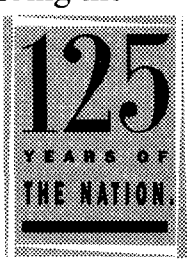

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we see particular wars and war preparations as inherent manifestations of a war *system*, and that we ask ourselves what an equally dynamic, self-sustaining *peace* system might look like. As soon as we do this, we broaden the traditional definition of peace to include questions of economic justice, ecology and technology, politics and culture. The very complexity such a definition entails is enough to drive most activists back into single-issue antiwar work. Yet we must persist in this kind of long-term analysis and prognosis. If we consider that war is not just a matter of battlefields and bullets but that it has political, economic, cultural and environmental causes and consequences as well, then we must begin to envision "peace" in similarly complex, integrated terms.

One central element in any robust "peace system" is democracy, or, to put it another way, a politics of human dignity and equality that affords all citizens an equal opportunity to shape the decisions that affect their lives. While there is no such thing as perfect democracy, it is partly for lack of a *better* democracy that the peace movement, and nearly every other progressive movement, has failed to achieve its goals, including the avoidance of war.

The Persian Gulf crisis is a case in point. Had we put in place a decade or two ago a series of democratic reforms designed to make the political process serve the public's interests before those of the corporate elite, we might have had energy policies that eliminated our dependence on Middle East oil; we might have slowed the scandalous international arms trade that has provided countries like Iraq with enormous arsenals of modern weaponry; we might have worked to strengthen, rather than weaken, the United Nations and especially its peacekeeping capabilities (the United States owes 79 percent of the outstanding debt of member nations), and the Pentagon might have been forced to scrap its post-

cold war ambition of policing "'instability' throughout the Third World," so well described by Robert L. Borosage in his September 24 *Nation* article.

The same moneyed interests that turned the political tide against such policies are very much in the driver's seat today, as the government decides how to respond to (or take advantage of) Iraq's invasion of Kuwait. The crisis has given the arms industry, with its thousands of subcontracting businesses, a new lease on life. What is *its* influence on policy-making circles? The oil industry stands to reap windfall profits if prices continue to rise and the demand for more domestic oil forces a lifting of environmental restrictions on offshore drilling. How loud will *its* voice be in the ears of Congressional and White House decision makers?

The sad fact, with few exceptions, is that even when we have citizens' movements supported by overwhelming majorities, they can rarely muster as much political clout in Washington (or state capitals) as the wealthy vested interests that finance the re-election campaigns of our representatives. The government's response to the freeze campaign was an example of this antidemocratic phenomenon, but it's the same story whether we're talking about nuclear disarmament or universal health care, jobs for minority youth or intervention in Central America, ozone depletion or low-income housing, capital gains taxes or Middle East policy.

The problem of money in politics is so deeply ingrained, and our public officials so caught up in it (albeit with decreasing enthusiasm), that Congress and state legislatures will never adopt serious democratic reform until they feel the heat of sustained grass-roots pressure from a broad-based (and absolutely nonpartisan) citizens' pro-democracy movement. In order to inspire such a movement, however, proposals for reform must be bold and comprehensive. None of the current reforms being debated in Washington meet this test: not caps on campaign spending, cheaper rates for campaign television commercials, the abolition of all political action committees (which would simply drive up contributions from wealthy individuals representing the same interests), or even partial public financing (which subsidizes rather than eliminates the "money chase"). If private money, because it is so unequally and unjustly distributed, is not a suitable medium for political democracy, then no private funding whatsoever should be allowed. Instead, public elections should be financed entirely with public money.

The cost of such a scheme—$5 to $10 per year per taxpayer to provide total public financing for all Congressional and presidential candidates—would be but a fraction of what the current system is costing us. If media reform were added to the package—if, for example, the highly profitable television industry were required to provide eligible candidates with free and equal access to the airwaves—the overall cost might be cut in half. If we compare this with the several thousand dollars per taxpayer that the savings and loan bailout alone will cost us, total public financing is a bargain-basement deal.

The elimination of privately financed election campaigns would cause a sea change in U.S. politics. Anyone capable of attracting public support—for example, by gathering a

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required number of petition signatures or endorsement cards—could run a competitive campaign for major public office, regardless of whether that person had lots of money or the ability to raise it. Instead of spending their time and energy raising money, candidates could spend it, in Texas Agriculture Commissioner Jim Hightower's words, "raising issues, raising hopes and raising hell." Most important, elected officials, once in office, would be much freer to make policy on the basis of the public's interests rather than those of their private financial backers.

Dramatic "pro-democracy" movements in Eastern Europe, the Soviet Union, South Africa, China, Burma, Chile and elsewhere have created a propitious global climate in which Americans have already begun to reexamine the quality of democracy at home. As conditions that directly affect people's lives continue to worsen—the unemployment/drugs/violence syndrome in our inner cities, the toxic poisoning of communities, deteriorating public schools and diminishing social services nearly everywhere—more and more people are noticing the corruption and bankruptcy of our political system and its transparent inability to solve, or even address, these problems.

The question is, What steps can we take to organize and carry out a program for a pro-democracy movement that could flourish in the current national and global environment? There is no definitive science of social movements; like the individuals that compose them, social movements must be seen as constantly evolving, organic entities whose life cycles are predictable only in the most general sense, at best. Nevertheless, in thinking about the creation of a pro-democracy movement, a number of lessons come to my mind from the recent experience of the nuclear disarmament movement and, in particular, the freeze campaign:

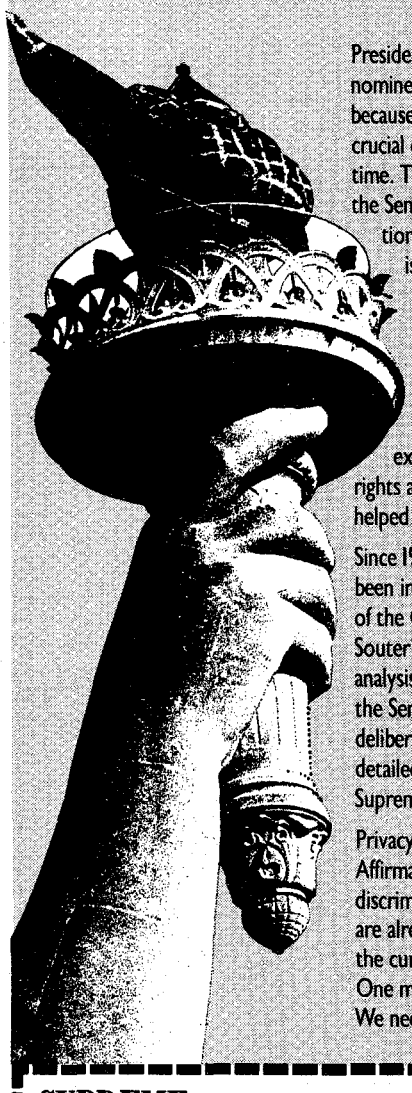
§ Paint the big picture at the outset, especially if most of the emphasis is initially placed on one specific reform. Make it clear where that reform—be it a halt in nuclear weapons production or the abolition of privately financed election campaigns—is expected to lead and what other, related changes are necessary. Otherwise the target becomes an end in itself and is more vulnerable to derailment or co-optation.

§ Err on the side of too much rather than too little time spent building the movement's grass-roots support. Particularly in light of the antidemocratic political clout of corporate money in the policy-making arenas, social movements cannot hope to succeed without the strength that arises from good old-fashioned community organizing and the creation of sturdy coalitions.

§ Don't believe your own press. One of the reasons the freeze campaign turned to the Congressional arena too soon was because we believed what *Time* and *Newsweek* were saying about us—that this was the largest, most powerful movement in recent U.S. history, a prairie fire of citizen protest that was taking Washington by storm. Nonsense. That was a sensational story that sold a lot of magazines. The strength of our public support was miles wide but only inches deep, and the politicians knew it.

§ Don't make grass-roots lobbying of Congress (or state

PRESIDENT BUSH PULLS A FAST ONE



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legislatures) the primary task that movement supporters are asked to perform, even when it is time to focus on legislation. As the freeze campaign discovered, lobbying alone does not sustain, much less build, a social movement. Instead, it tends to remove the issue from the communities where people live and work, and it reinforces the notion that change can happen only if "they"—the elites in Washington or the state capital—make it happen. Instead, a healthy movement requires independent actions that can be taken locally and that can bring about some degree of change locally.

§ Create clear litmus tests and define your own victories. Early on, the freeze campaign tried to make it clear that reductions in nuclear weapons, unaccompanied by a complete halt to all production, were unacceptable. But in later years, in the wake of ballyhooed summit meetings and "dramatic" proposals for 50 percent to 100 percent reductions, the campaign joined in the acclaim, albeit critically, and thus lost its cutting edge. To date, despite some minor reductions of already-deployed weapons, not a single new nuclear-weapons system has been halted.

§ Most important of all, create a diverse, multiracial movement from the outset. Movements that are primarily white, and white-collar, as the freeze was (and the environmental movement is), find it nearly impossible to attract blue-collar workers and people of color to their ranks—even when they try (and, more often than not, they don't). Any relatively homogeneous group will naturally adopt its own culturally defined language and mode of operation, and it should come as no surprise that people with other cultural norms will feel excluded.

The rationale for creating a diverse movement is not simply, or even primarily, a matter of mustering additional political strength, as important as that is. An even more compelling reason is that racism and other forms of prejudice are probably the most insidious and destructive of all the ills our society faces—and they are on the rise. Thus it is doubly important that a nascent pro-democracy movement break out of society's cultural divisions right from the beginning. Diversity, particularly racial diversity, must characterize the leadership as well as the membership of this new movement, both locally and nationally.

Fundamental reform of our system of political democracy is in nearly everyone's interest. It has the potential to join all the issues we care about and thereby cut across all the boundaries that separate us. If we want to see crises elsewhere in the world defused peaceably rather than used as excuses for military buildups, then we must democratize the political process. If we want decent, affordable housing available to all, then we must insist on equal political opportunity for people without wealth. If we want to see health care become a universal right, then we must create a political system in which well-financed medical and pharmaceutical lobbies don't have disproportionate influence. If we want to prevent future S&L disasters and make the wealthy pay their fair share of this one, then we must demand a separation of wealth and state. If we want to protect and restore the quality of our air, water and soil before current deterioration becomes irreversible, then we must make sure that the election campaigns of our public servants are not financed by corporate polluters. And, if we have any hope of our country ever standing in solidarity with people who are poor and oppressed in other countries, then we certainly must make good on the principle of government of, by and for the people here at home. □

Rebirth in Chile

(*Continued From Front Cover*)

few days after the takeover to congratulate them and suggest, fruitlessly and ingenuously as it turned out, that they hand power over to the waiting civilians, would be the main speaker at Allende's funeral.

Most Chileans expected the family to choose September 11 as the date for that funeral, the anniversary, after all, of Allende's death—a fitting way, they thought, of closing and completing a circle that had been broken. But Allende's kin showed a deeper wisdom and chose September 4 instead, the day when we Chileans have, for most of our independent history, held our presidential balloting. It was on that date, exactly twenty years before, that Allende had become the first socialist in history to come to power in democratic elections, opening up the breathtaking possibility that deep structural change could be achieved through peaceful means, that socialism could be built without repressing its adversaries. To hold the ceremony that day was to reaffirm Allende's democratic credentials and therefore to deny the legitimacy of the military intervention—which had been contrived, carried out and then justified by Chile's conservative forces, with the enthusiastic aid of Nixon, Kissinger and company, as the only way of saving the country from "communism." All the horrors that were to follow could henceforth be trumpeted as the lesser of two evils, authoritarianism as the unfortunate remedy to stem the tide of totalitarianism—as long, of course, as Allende could be painted as a Marxist autocrat.

Allende's public rehabilitation, the fact that a socialist should be honored officially as a great democrat precisely at a moment in contemporary history when socialism is in crisis because of its failure to be pluralistic and participatory, drove Chilean right wingers and assorted army generals into a veritable frenzy. In a barrage of ludicrous statements over the past months they have accused the Allendistas of wanting, with the acquiescence of the Christian Democrats, to "rewrite history"—as if history belonged only to the people in power and as if they themselves had not spent the past seventeen years rewriting it with bullets and censorship; as if the people of Chile had not been writing and rewriting Allende's story and our own story all these years, writing it through our protests, rewriting it in the silence of our hearts, biding our time until we would be strong enough to resurrect

Ariel Dorfman teaches each spring at Duke University and spends the rest of the year in his native Chile. His latest book is My House Is on Fire *(Viking).*

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into daylight the body we had kept alive in the forbidden darkness of our imagination.

On the day of the funeral, watching the calm, fervent crowds, the photographs hidden inside mattresses all these years and finally held aloft as the coffin went by, the old man crying like a baby right into a Chilean flag crumpled in his hands, the youngsters who had not been born when Allende disappeared calling out his name like an incantation against death, the thousands upon thousands of the dirt poor who lost a day's pay so they would be able to tell their grandchildren that they had been here, the women in wheelchairs pushing themselves toward Allende's new grave as if it were heaven, the flowers falling from a myriad of hands, I wondered at the miracle of it all, at how these people had kept Allende's memory burning in the midst of their despair and terror. I wondered at the millions of hours they must have waited for this day, while the soldiers ravaged their land and their families. Allende had survived because these people had survived.

It had been exactly seventeen years since his supporters had last seen Salvador Allende alive. I had been among the million shouting marchers who had poured into the streets of Santiago on September 4, 1973, to celebrate the third anniversary of our electoral victory. That night it had taken the group I had joined seven fervorous hours to reach the balcony of La Moneda, where Allende was saluting the multitudes. We marched by, singing and chanting and unfurling flags, and for a magic moment as we passed our leader we somehow convinced ourselves that we were as strong as ever, that we could still change the history of humanity and free our country from the misery that had plagued it ever since we could remember. Then we looked back and saw him there, standing alone on that balcony waving a distant white handkerchief, and something unspoken and grievous inside every one of us made us turn the corner and go around the block and mingle with the next overflowing column and pass by again one long last time. Our hoarse voices might roar that the people united would never be defeated, that we would overcome, *Venceremos*, over and over, but what we were really doing that night was saying goodbye to our President. We must have known deep inside that Allende's days were numbered, that all our days were numbered and that those who were doing the numbering and would soon do the killing were the military.

Of the all too many who were to die in the years ahead, Allende would be the first—probably having committed suicide, although there are still recalcitrant souls who insist that he was murdered by the army. For those who were to be tortured and exiled and jailed, for those who were to be dismissed from their jobs, for those whose relatives were to die far from home or were to be denied a tomb, for those who had to hush their own children out of fear, Allende remained for almost two decades a symbol of both collective loss and collective hope. To every Chilean who suffered in some deep inconsolable way during that time—and many had not been supporters of Allende—to be able to bury the former President was a way of vicariously burying their

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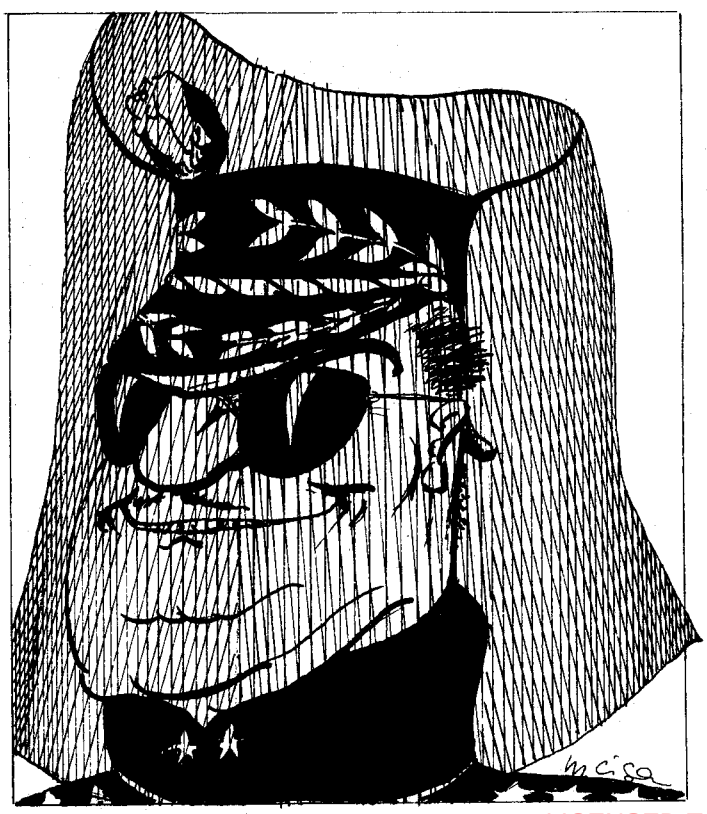
own affliction, proof that the nightmare was really ending.

All of a sudden, in the midst of the clenched fists and chanted slogans of the immense crowd, I had the dizzying sensation that time had stopped, that our goodbye at La Moneda and our goodbye at this cemetery so many years later were consecutive, that nothing had happened in between.

The illusion soon dissipated.

Time had indeed passed, in Chile and in the world. Not all was victory that day. If Pinochet had been unable to block Allende's funeral, Allende's followers had been unable to oust Pinochet totally from power. It is not merely the fact that the general is still Commander in Chief of the army; that his designated cronies hold veto power in the Senate, in the Supreme Court and in the townships, obstructing popular sovereignty; it is not only that mistrust and lies have damaged Chile's moral landscape and will affect who knows how many future generations but that Pinochet's policies have altered the way in which Chile dreams of itself and its future.

Part of the vast oppressed country that had elected Allende may stubbornly persist and emerge at solemn moments such as this one, but most Chileans have abandoned any thought of radically altering society, cheerfully expecting the Western model of development and consumption to solve our problems. It is because Allende's own socialists, like so many leftists around the world, have embraced the joys of the market economy that they can now govern with the Christian Democrats, their former rivals, accepting that the most they can hope for is a limited redistribution of services and income to the poorer sections of the country. This alliance, bringing together the progressive social forces whose division opened the way to military intervention, has given Chile's transition to democracy great stability and will allow the dictatorship's legislation and influence to be gradually dismantled. And Aylwin's style of government—decent, ethical, truthful—has begun to heal the fierce wounds of the nation. But the word "revolution" is pronounced now only by the Communists, once the Chilean left's most moderate and responsible party and now in utter disarray, ostracized both because of their failed policy of armed struggle and because of the worldwide breakdown of the bureaucratic socialist model.



If it is possible to chant with the crowds that this funeral was a resurrection of a man we refused to forget, it turned out to be simultaneously a real farewell, an occasion in which one could measure how many of the ideas he believed in, how many of his insurrectionary hopes, were receiving an authentic burial, perhaps a definite nostalgic fare-thee-well.

And yet there are ways in which Allende could not be more our contemporary. None of the major problems to which he dedicated his existence have been resolved since his death: On the contrary, for the majority of Chileans, Latin Americans and Third World people in the past two decades, living standards, rather than getting better, have progressively deteriorated. We are, if anything, less independent than before, further behind, more vulnerable. The tasks of economic, technological and cultural autonomy that Allende proclaimed are as necessary today as they were yesterday—and they must, moreover, just as Allende reiterated ceaselessly, be achieved through democratic means, by making everyday people the protagonists of their own destiny. He would have been the first to point out that more capitalism as a remedy and solace for the ills with which capitalism itself has mercilessly plagued us for so many centuries cannot be the real answer to our dilemmas.

The tragedy is that, like that other experiment of those years that attempted to reconcile socialism with democracy, the Prague Spring of 1968, we never got the chance to explore an alternative. We were crushed, respectively, by the self-proclaimed world representatives of socialism and of democracy, trapped by the fears of the cold war. In the Chilean case, even though Allende had personally condemned the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, he did not, and possibly could not, as I could not and did not along with most of the left, draw the deeper conclusions of that failure. We did not see the Eastern European search as a mirror in which to learn. We were so much more democratic than our right-wing enemies that we thought it unnecessary to look deep into our own ambiguities and weaknesses.

To critique those ideas, and many others, is to dare to begin a real conversation with Allende. Finally, that may be the most far-reaching consequence of the September 4 funeral. While Allende lay in an unmarked tomb, denied to us as the *desaparecidos* of Chile are still denied to their relatives by the armed forces, we had to keep his myth alive—and one can receive consolation or inspiration from a myth but one cannot hold a dialogue with the man behind it.

Now that Salvador Allende, so dead and so alive, has been returned to the earth we set aside for him all these years, we can begin to live with him and without him, in a world that needs more than ever the social justice and the full participation he dreamt of for all. □

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BOOKS & THE ARTS.

As Nasty as He Wants to Be

FREDRIC PAUL SMOLER

One evening last summer I walked into the neighborhood record store and asked a kid working the floor for the dozen most offensive recordings they had: orthodox racist, sexist, antiwhite, whatever was in stock. The staff got into it; the young black clerk, reassured by the presence of Guns 'n Roses in my first half-dozen tapes, came up with a few of the more obscure misogynous rappers. Toting up the bill, the balding, longhaired, fortyish manager wished me happy listening; I looked skeptical. Beaming, confident he'd done me a good turn, he pointed to three of the cassettes: "You'll love the Diceman," he assured me. I spent the next few days trying to figure out why so many people do, and I'm left with some uneasy suspicions about why comic Andrew Dice Clay is uniquely hateful to, well, people like us.

Andrew Dice Clay was born Andrew Silverstein thirtysomething years ago and has attained his celebrity by striking a series of poses as the Diceman. These personae are neither stable nor consistent, but in Clay's act the accent, much of the idiom, the references to high school but never college, to plastic-covered furniture and Cheez Whiz, are a pretty explicit self-identification as a member of one of the classes for which media critics seem to have remarkably little enthusiasm. *The Village Voice*, ordinarily tireless in its admiration for voices from below, genuinely abominates Clay and his audience: A *Voice* critic wrote something about Clay's drawing his fans the way rotting meat draws maggots, and at *The New York Times* Jon Pareles, reviewing Clay in concert, sounded like a man covering a Nazi rally in late Weimar.

This sensibility is not unique to the *Voice* and the *Times*; among my politically correct students, where elaborate political pieties sometimes seem mandatory, the only unchallengeable ethnic epithet is "guido." The *Voice* writers, Pareles and some left lit-crit people (not to mention *The Nation*'s own Christopher Hitchens) generally exult in what they take to be the subtly nuanced views of 2 Live Crew's sexual politics or Professor Griff's observations on American Jewry, and practically everybody exhibits a solemn regard for the political acumen of Public Enemy's fans. Clay is not as vulnerable to yahoo sheriffs as 2 Live Crew is—he is white, and he recorded his act on a major label—and the American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, although it has genuine cause for alarm, has little chance of pressuring Clay to fire anybody connected with his act. But Clay's audience has one striking distinction: It is the only social formation politically correct to despise.

Fredric Paul Smoler teaches history and literature at Sarah Lawrence College.

Clay's audience has one striking distinction: It is the only social formation politically correct to despise.

Clay's act is at first glance a monotonous torrent of abuse, a very clumsy series of borrowings—sub-Rickles melded with *faux*-Bruce—and a few hopelessly failed attempts to do Foxx or Pryor in whiteface. A second look shows it to be more various, considerably darker and difficult to characterize. Some of Clay's humor is misogynous and racist, some of it is vicious and much of it is infantile at best. His partisans' extraordinary enthusiasm for dirty Mother Goose rhymes—they chant them in unison—pretty much baffles me. But the interesting question remains: What other elements in it account for his rise? Clay can connect powerfully with people—it is presumably the palpable strength of that connection that so disturbs his critics—but we must not conclude that it is only what is vile in him that moves his audience. Critics on the left should be a little less eager to assume that an immense popular success is due only to the baseness of ordinary people.

The saddest things about the nightclub act are a loathing of all sentiment, which Clay takes for sentimentality, and—the harshest note, the one that has been pretty much purged from his movie, *The Adventures of Ford Fairlane*—a concealed but knowing hatred of the world Clay and his admirers actually live in, the public streets and lower-middle-class and working-class bedrooms of the modern American city.

On the evidence of the act and the audience's response, sex is inevitably something that makes people lie and scheme, and the figure of the Diceman is that of someone too guileless or too powerful to have to dissimulate. The pairs of women in the Philadelphia club audience—the one on the videocassette—seem to find this a hilarious articulation of an unadorned male id; an example would be the character of the Diceman expostulating something to the effect of, "Whaddayuh mean, yuh didden know I wanned tuh fuck yuh—I bawtcha a pizza, didden I?" Clay himself occasionally finds this situation less hilarious than do his auditors; he ends one bit with the grim-voiced admonition, "I didden make the rules, I just abide by 'em." I think Clay hates something about sex in America—not the act itself but any cant about it and much of what people do to get some. This part of the act is not simple misogyny.

Compared with 2 Live Crew, whose sadomasochistic fantasy seems "ironized" and "parodic" only in the imagination of certain professors of English, the harshness of Clay's language seems unremarkable; interestingly, the Diceman noisily boasts about committing sexual acts (cunnilingus, anilingus) that 2 Live Crew just as noisily scorns as unmanly. Some of Clay's explicitly misogynous material (and Eddie Murphy's as well) seems driven by a terror that a former wife will get her mitts on his new wealth. While threats to their sudden, still improbable fortunes agitate Clay and Murphy, Clay and his hero Sylvester Stallone can lapse into garish sentimentality about being deserving little men who've made it to the top of the heap. Clay's teary mush on *Arsenio Hall* seemed first to baffle and then disconcert his fans. These private dreads and personal enthusiasms rupture the connection between performer and audience, the latter having no wealth imperiled by former wives and no sudden celebrity to dull its cynicism about happy endings.

Clay is generally taciturn about bosses, working conditions and most other

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realities of working- and lower-middle-class economic life. These themes make their way into the act only obliquely, as in the imprecations the Diceman screams at a panhandler, something like, "Whaddayuh think you're gonna do wit' a quawduh, start yer own fuckin' business? Why don't you go rob somebody and earn your money, you fuckin' piece of shit." I read this as a coded double admission, first that neither panhandlers nor Clay's listeners have the wherewithal to start their own businesses, and second that the thought of violence—the imagined violence of mugging, the rhetorical violence of Clay's comic persona—may be a more appealing response to a situation of defeat than broken-spirited pretenses of civility.

Clay's audience may well suspect that it is not going to make it out of the old neighborhoods and into the better suburbs, that the unionized jobs are disappearing, that the older cities they adorned are ugly and savage, and that the Japanese are buying up midtown, but a lie about a happy ending, a consoling marriage and family of one's own remains too dangerous to tolerate: That lie is still enraging. Above all else, Clay assaults any coyness, even any optimism, about sexual love. The loathing of romance as idiotic cant is too harsh to be sustained even by the comic persona; both the film and the video end with cloying, mawkish fantasies of the Diceman come upon True Love. Clay's audience is scarcely immune to romantic glosses of its situation, or to anodyne visions of True Love; it is rather surfeited of them, and Clay may function as a horrid doppelgänger of Bruce Springsteen. Springsteen can mourn the losses of the world of work and celebrate sexual love, but the Diceman's universe is a harsh refuge from dangerous deceits, the ones that break the heart.

The figure of the Diceman comprises at least three personae; the scornful cynic is the most prominent. The one made up of "attitude" is also interesting: It is the fantasy of an explicitly lower-class white male endowed with a magical immunity from the powerlessness of his social situation, who never has to shut up in the face of superior social authority or the power conferred on another by one's own sexual desire. Attitude is angry pridefulness, summed up in the insistence that "Dice don't get fucked, Dice does the fuckin'." Another persona is a buffoon crossed with an urban bumpkin, replete with malapropisms and fatuous assertions of charm and sophistication. This is a very old comic type indeed, and part of its effectiveness is due to a very real fact that many members of Clay's audience know: that they cannot negotiate without risk the variegated social world where there are manners, utensils and plenty of people to mark a kid from the old neighborhood for a vulgarian and a fool.

A portion of the old nightclub act is quite viciously racist, though not chiefly against blacks; in the video, Clay seems possessed of a sad desire to have the kind of authenticity and street authority he attributes to blacks, and in the clubs he confines himself to celebratory remarks about the size of black penises. The tone sometimes reminds me of Eddie Murphy's affection for Italian kids who have just gotten out of a *Rocky* flick, with an implication that working-class black and white city dwellers are not absolutely alien to one another.

Clay *is* viciously racist against Asians, takes his shots at Muslims from the Middle East and excites his audience when he fantasizes about a sign in airports warning, "If you don't know the language, get the fuck oudda the country"; he exhilarates them when he adds the afterthought that the sign should also be printed in Spanish. I suspect that for Clay's audience, the first two groups are those to whom the economic future belongs, a future from which the audience has been disinherited, at the end of what is no longer an American century, in a society no longer even imaginable as uniformly "middle class." The bit about Spanish, the ridicule of immigrants who can't speak English, seems a despairing attempt to inflate the value of the only cultural capital his audience is certain it possesses.

In the most recent audio release, part of Clay's audience seems to have moved up-market a bit and another to have flown in from Western climes. The out-of-towners do not have the urban, East Coast, ethnic and blue-collar accents of the audience on the first album and the video; their laughter seems less inflected by a note of comic recognition, and the elements in the crowd who want the old stuff, the Mother Goose rhymes, seem to annoy Clay. These trends seem likely to continue with the attempt at a national movie audience, and will probably make the Diceman a bit less gritty; I suspect that the buffoon and the sexual vulgarian will crowd out the knowing, angry tones that sometimes creep into Clay's act.

I do not mean to deny that much of

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Clay's act is very nasty and in no way funny, nor do I elide that humorless nastiness in order to conceal it. But I do find it noteworthy that for the ranking of lower orders the academic and journalistic left has contrived a curious division of favor: One subordinated social formation has been sentimentalized while another has been demonized.

This moral hierarchy of slum street over outer borough is not new; it dates back at least to the sixties, when some of the fathers and uncles of Clay's audience were heaving bricks at antiwar demonstrators and noisily cheering for Nixon. Just now, when the fault lines in the Republican coalition are rumbling, when the Governor of New Jersey is gambling on the class consciousness of the young people who cheered the Diceman at the Meadowlands concert, the pleasures of devising and maintaining this moral hierarchy may be something we should learn to do without. □

The Companies That Kept Him

GEOFFREY RIPS

MEANS OF ASCENT: The Years of Lyndon Johnson. *By Robert A. Caro. Knopf. 506 pp. $24.95.*

As we enter the homestretch of what has proved to be one of the meanest statewide races in Texas since Lyndon Johnson squared off against Coke Stevenson in the 1948 senatorial contest, gubernatorial candidates Ann Richards and Clayton Williams are locked mano a mano in a struggle for control of the state as Texas continues in the grip of an economic malaise after four decades of phenomenal growth. Their fight is one more round of a power struggle that has been at the heart of Texas politics, and crucial to national politics, for the better part of fifty years. To understand the forces at work in Texas on the downside of an era dominated by the unholy trinity of oil, high finance and the military industry, it is important to get a reading of Texas history after World War II, when those forces first coalesced around the political career of Lyndon Baines Johnson.

One would think that Robert Caro's *Means of Ascent*, which purports to cover this critical period in the history of Texas Democratic politics, would add to the understanding of the current situation. But as many reviewers have by now suggested, Caro turns what is a complex and important chapter in our nation's history into a morality play. Despite his stated intention that the Johnson biography "be a study not merely of his life but of American history during the years of his life," in Caro's hands Lyndon Johnson's ascent appears to be a triumph of the will, for which political and economic forces serve as mere window dressing. What Caro depicts as a simplistic battle between a reluctant Western legend (Governor Coke Stevenson, Johnson's opponent in the Senate campaign of 1948) and an ambitious, overreaching politician was actually a complicated and visible playing out of a wholesale power shift taking place in Texas politics, which continues to resonate throughout the Texas and national political scenes. This shift involves the capture of the liberal wing of the Democratic Party, represented by the New Dealers, by business interests who chose Johnson as the horse to ride beginning in the mid-1940s. These interests included military contractors, major oil companies, bankers and insurance companies.

Texas in the 1930s and 1940s was undergoing a major social and economic upheaval only partially related to the Depression and its aftermath. In the early 1930s Texas was still very much an agrarian state whose politics were infused with a populist distrust of Eastern financiers, railroad tycoons and the other demons that plagued what New Deal architect and University of Texas economics professor Robert Montgomery at the time described as a colonial society, serving up raw farm materials and mineral production for the enrichment of those who processed it and sold it in world markets. Cotton was king, and Dallas was a cotton-trading center. In 1930 the great east Texas oilfield was discovered, and the oil fortunes of H.L. Hunt, Sid Richardson and the Murchison family were in their infancy. In addition, the oil market was a victim of overproduction and low prices.

At this point, according to George Norris Green in *The Establishment in Texas Politics: The Primitive Years, 1938–1957*, the oil industry began to assert itself in Texas politics. The president of Humble Oil, Ross Sterling, left his post

Geoffrey Rips is a former editor of the Texas Observer.

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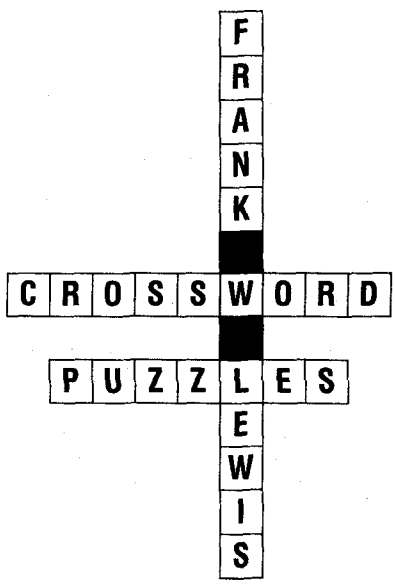

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and became Governor in 1931 with the avowed purpose of imposing oil production controls, particularly on the independent operators, who were driving down the price per barrel. Sterling sent the National Guard, commanded by the chief counsel for the Texas Oil Company (Texaco), into the oilfields to close down production. Eventually, John Nance Garner, Sam Rayburn and Texas Senator Tom Connally pushed the Connally Hot Oil Act through Congress, giving states the power to set production quotas and enforcing those quotas on interstate shipments, thereby bequeathing the elected Texas Railroad Commission real power in regulating oil production (providing a model used by OPEC several decades later) and cutting off independent producers from processing income.

The oil industry boomed. Dallas and Houston became centers for the oil industry, with Dallas also becoming a major insurance and financial center. By 1948 income from mineral extraction in Texas exceeded farm and ranch income, attracting money and speculators, like the young George Bush, from around the country. One-eighth of the jobholders in Texas worked in oil-related industries. At the same time, the industry was becoming rapidly concentrated. In 1939 less than 53 percent of the nation's oil reserves were controlled by the major oil companies, while just three years later they controlled 70 percent. By 1948 more than half of the state's oil was being produced by thirteen companies. In addition, the petrochemical industry established itself during the war in what is called the Golden Triangle along the Gulf Coast near Houston, and military contracting became big business in Texas with Johnson, among others, working to secure cut-rate postwar deals on federal munitions plants for Texas financiers. At the end of the war organized labor found an enthusiastic work force among returning veterans. Between May 1946 and February 1947 the Texas Congress of Industrial Organizations boasted sixty-four victories in Texas factories, with 14,500 workers joining C.I.O. affiliates in the oil, textile, steel, automotive and meatpacking industries.

Into this field strode Lyndon Baines Johnson. Johnson had begun his Congressional career bringing rural electrification to the hill country and public works projects to central Texas, which suffered alternately from droughts and floods. It was Johnson's help in securing water-project contracts for Brown & Root Construction Company that had first made him useful to Herman and George Brown, his first financial backers along with New Dealer and Austin newspaper magnate Charles Marsh. With their help, Johnson's network of financial backers expanded. But in the early 1940s Johnson's financial backing was no match for Stevenson's list, a who's who of the Texas establishment.

The Texas establishment was at great odds with the Roosevelt Administration. After John Nance Garner led a failed attempt to prevent Roosevelt's nomination for a third term (forces supporting Roosevelt were led by Johnson and former San Antonio Congressman and New Deal loyalist Maury Maverick), ultraconservative Texas Democratic oilmen and business leaders concentrated on state politics, finding in Coke Stevenson the ideal caretaker for laissez-faire government. This group virtually underwrote Texas politics. They were decidedly antilabor, against all government regulation except that which helped big oil, and backed candidates, publications and radio programs that denounced what they perceived as a conspiracy of African-Americans, New Dealers, labor leaders and communists. Their number included Dallas banker Nathan Adams, Humble Oil executive Harry Weiss, Houston oilmen Hugh Roy Cullen and Craig Cullinan, insurance executive Marrs McLean, the chief counsel for Humble Oil, the lobbyist for Sinclair Oil, *Houston Post* owner Oveta Culp Hobby, Richard Kleberg of the King Ranch, and Lamar Fleming, chief officer of the Anderson-Clayton Company.

In 1944 the "Texas Regulars," as they called themselves, seized control of the state Democratic Party at the party's May convention. They were outmaneuvered by the New Dealers at a second state convention in September and bolted to form an unsuccessful third party with a platform that supported white supremacy and states' rights and opposed organized labor. Roosevelt ended up carrying the state with three-quarters of the vote, and the Texas Regular Party disbanded. Its movers and shakers, however, did sneak back into the Democratic Party, where they backed Strom Thurmond and the Dixiecrats in 1948 and worked for Eisenhower in both 1952 and 1956.

The bitter war within the state Democratic Party is given short shrift in Caro's work, especially when compared with the pages devoted to Johnson's helicopter or his kidney stones. But it is crucial to un-

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derstanding the 1948 election and the rise of Lyndon Johnson. Stevenson was the candidate of the Texas Regulars. Johnson managed to get himself into position to be the candidate of the New Deal faction. While many Texas liberals were uncomfortable with his vacillations and lack of commitment to a liberal agenda, he was clearly the more liberal choice. The key to Johnson's victory in 1948 was not so much that he ushered in a new era of campaigning, complete with direct mail and helicopters, or that he bought votes in south Texas, even if he did go beyond the bounds of any previous or subsequent vote buying in the state.

The key to Johnson's victory, and its importance, lay in his ability to peel some of the money away from the establishment bloc and put together a new business coalition primed for the economic expansionism of the postwar era, and marry that coalition, at least temporarily, to the New Deal, liberal wing of the Democratic Party. With the help of Sid Richardson and Herman Brown, he was able to get the support of independent oilman and *Fort Worth Star-Telegram* publisher Amon Carter, who was interested in securing military contracts for the Fort Worth area. Though Caro spends dozens of pages on Johnson's use of a helicopter as a campaign innovation, he fails to point out, as Ronnie Dugger does in *The Politician*, that Johnson's pilot for a helicopter supplied by Bell Aircraft later became an officer of Bell, which moved its entire helicopter operation to the Dallas–Fort Worth area and became the world's largest builder of helicopters, producing 200 a month in Texas in 1967, four-fifths of which were for the military.

As the New Deal gave way to the Fair Deal, Johnson was adding influential backers, including Hughes Aircraft, Leonard McCollum of Conoco, Gardner Symonds of Tenneco and the Murchison family. Robert Sherrill, who wrote that L.B.J. wore the New Deal "like a reversible vest," cites an interview with Johnson confidant Ed Clark, in which Clark says that after F.D.R.'s death Johnson latched onto the big money out of Dallas as his ticket to the top.

There were several issues that would bring Johnson the price of that ticket, including the control of tidelands oil and the labor issue. The control of offshore oil deposits was the focal point of an ongoing battle between Texas oil magnates and the federal government. In 1948, according to George Green, Johnson was "privately telling friends that he really favored federal control of tidelands oil but was publicly campaigning for a bill to place the tidelands in Texas hands." The Brown brothers, who had recently added key oil pipelines to their holdings, persuaded many of their peers of Johnson's commitment to Texas oil.

Johnson, meanwhile, had also voted for the Taft-Hartley Act and to override Truman's veto of it. This brought Coke Stevenson the A.F.L. endorsement in the 1948 Senate race and allowed Johnson to tar Stevenson as the labor candidate while still quietly accepting monetary support from several major unions. His newly explicit anti-union stance won him the admiration of the Murchisons and coincided with an antilabor legislative initiative spearheaded by Herman Brown.

In what should have been the denouement of Caro's story, had he infused it with the drama he allotted other aspects of the 1948 Senate race, Johnson was given a litmus test by the ultraconservative hard-liners of the Dallas establishment when he was offered the most influential radio spot in the state, controlled by this group and broadcast statewide,

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on the condition that he use it to give verbatim what was known as "Pappy's Speech," delivered for several years by know-nothing Governor, later Senator, W. Lee (Pappy) O'Daniel. It was a rambling diatribe against "union goons" and communists. After much soul-searching, Johnson agreed. The rest is commentary. While the establishment and the oil barons ended up splitting their support between Johnson and Stevenson, the leaders of the new industrial class joined with most New Deal liberals to back Johnson against the obviously reactionary and Dixiecratic former Texas Regulars.

In the September state Democratic convention, which was called upon to certify Johnson's dubious victory, the Johnson forces joined with the liberals to throw out the conservative Stevenson faction, many of whom were openly supporting Strom Thurmond's Dixiecrat candidacy. And so the deal was cut. To a great majority of Texans at the time, the Senate race was secondary to the war within the party. As Ronnie Dugger notes, the long-term effect of that campaign was the joining of Texas New Dealers with Brown & Root in breaking union power in the state, signaling the beginning of a national decline in union strength.

Why was Caro compelled to reduce a rather complex and interesting history to a battle of personalities? Caro says the purpose of the work is to explore the way power works in America in the middle of the twentieth century. But it seems that, after the more inspired first volume, *The Path to Power*, Caro has become overwhelmed by the force of Johnson's personality, just as Johnson was said to have overwhelmed almost everyone with whom he had contact. As Johnson looms ever larger in Caro's field of vision, it becomes more and more difficult to grasp the lessons of history that should be available here. Johnson happened to be skillful enough to place himself at that point where the new business establishment of the postwar era gained control of the Democratic Party from whatever working-class identification and regulatory sentiment lingered from the Roosevelt era. (Dugger reports that there was talk of running John Connally for Senate in 1948 had Johnson not entered the race, and he would have served just as well.)

This business grouping, with some changes, continues to exercise control in the party today on the national scene (lest we forget John Connally's bosom buddy Robert Strauss or Johnson son-in-law Charles Robb) and is everywhere evident in the chambers of power in Texas. Ann Richards, as its current candidate, complete with the backing of what is left of the Johnson retinue, draws her support from the basic labor-minority-liberal Democratic coalition, combined with an important segment of the financial and business communities, as well as technological entrepreneurs positioning themselves for whatever market advantages the next century might afford.

Her opponent, telecommunications multimillionaire Clayton Williams, seems to have read early galleys of Caro's portrait of Coke Stevenson as Western mythic hero, upon which he has modeled his own campaign persona. Williams's good-old-boy racist and sexist perspective, revealed in rare unchoreographed moments, could have come straight from the horse's mouth (Stevenson's, that is). More important, his message is a return to nineteenth-century laissez-faire policy, and his support comes from the same reactionary forces that were once Texas Regulars, then Dixiecrats, then Shivercrats (after former Governor Allan Shivers), then Republicans—who ironically

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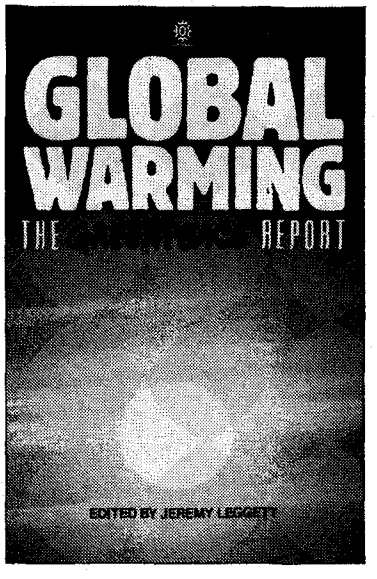

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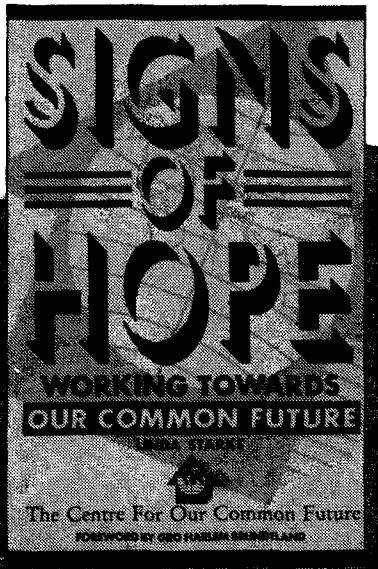

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gained a foothold with the election of John Tower to Lyndon Johnson's vacated Senate seat.

If the Democrats are snakebit in their pursuit of the White House, it is because the moneyed interests that first gathered behind Lyndon Johnson in 1948 have little tolerance for the public interests with which they must work. Johnson, particularly in the Great Society, was able briefly to make the marriage work. Candidates such as Ann Richards try to light the old flame again. But if we depend upon Robert Caro for an understanding of how those forces came together, we will never understand why they fell apart. □

MUSIC.

GENE SANTORO

Robert Johnson

When Robert Johnson recorded "Phonograph Blues" in November 1936, it was one of the first blues references to the technology. Recording hadn't yet transformed the blues from a hodgepodge of widely variant regional styles into a more homogeneous approach that, by the 1960s, had become virtually generic. Although an essential part of his myth (and life) was rambling, Johnson's own blues were shaped by more than just his actual travels, during which he picked up different regional styles—the minor-key broodings of Skip James, the slashing Texas call-and-response vocals-plus-guitar, the ragtimey Piedmont jaunts and the hard-core "deep" delta blues of his Mississippi birthplace. Instead, his blues also reflected what he heard on records. And as blues historians like Peter Guralnick and Robert Palmer have pointed out, Johnson's compact, crafted songs differed from most of his contemporaries' (with rare exceptions like James's or Leroy Carr's) because they were clearly shaped (or could be) for the three-minute recording limit of 78s.

Bluesmen (and the very few women who played the blues) performed primarily for dancers at juke joints, outdoor parties and picnics, as well as on street corners—wherever an audience with spare change and spare time could gather. Armed with formulaic verses, like the Homeric bards wandering ancient Hellas, they could plug in more or yank parts out, depending on whether a particular song reached their audience. As a result, many blues lyrics from Johnson's time and before can seem anything from disorganized to borderline incoherent—their plots were padded or abbreviated in response to audience reaction.

Like Skip James, Johnson apparently pruned his lyrics, honing them to a terrifying edge. Also like James (and unlike most of his contemporaries, at least from the recorded evidence), he seems to have formatted his musical accompaniments very tightly: Alternate takes from his 1936 and 1937 recording sessions display some shifts of detail from one take to the next, but always within a set arrangement. (The one exception is "Come on in My Kitchen," in which the alternate take lacks the menacing, hovering atmosphere of the one that was issued—a clear argument for the taste of Johnson's original producer, Don Law.) Besides offering mesmerizing virtuosity, Johnson's arrangements rotate around individual, distinctive riffs that mutate during the song's course to underline its lyrics; these arrangements whipsaw crossbeats back and forth between Johnson's piercing high-pitched singing and his achingly vocalic bottleneck guitar. In the process they foreshadow the latticework of rhythms of the postwar electrified urban blues pioneered by the likes of Muddy Waters, Howlin' Wolf and Johnson's stepson Robert Jr. Lockwood. Eventually, of course, Johnson's feels found their way into the blues' stepchild, rock and roll.

In 1961, when producer Frank Driggs compiled *Robert Johnson: King of the Delta Blues Singers* (CBS) from the masters for the blues legend's 78s, he understood that Johnson's art was highly wrought, even though little was known of the bluesman's life at that time. So Driggs shaped the album to reflect the curve of an imagined performance: kicking off with the haunting supernatural loneliness of "Crossroads Blues," taking listeners through the double-entendres of "Terraplane Blues" (Johnson's only regional hit) and building on the bitterly rising ironies of "Last Fair Deal Gone Down," "32-20 Blues" and "Kindhearted Woman Blues." Fittingly, Driggs wrapped up the album's sixteen cuts with what may well be two of the most frightening blues of all time, the aching Faust-in-Mississippi "Me and the Devil Blues" and its jagged companion piece, "Hellhound on My Trail."

A few years later *King of the Delta Blues Singers Vol. II*, which collected sixteen additional Johnson tracks, including alternate takes of "Kindhearted Woman

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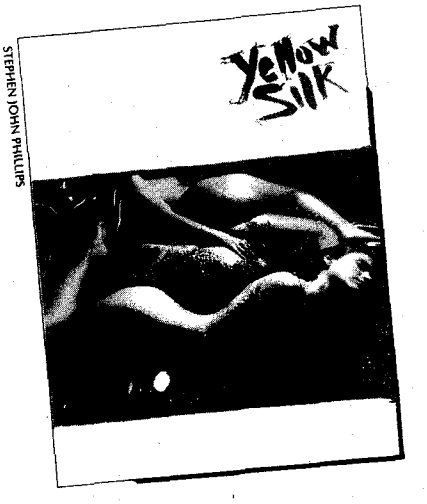

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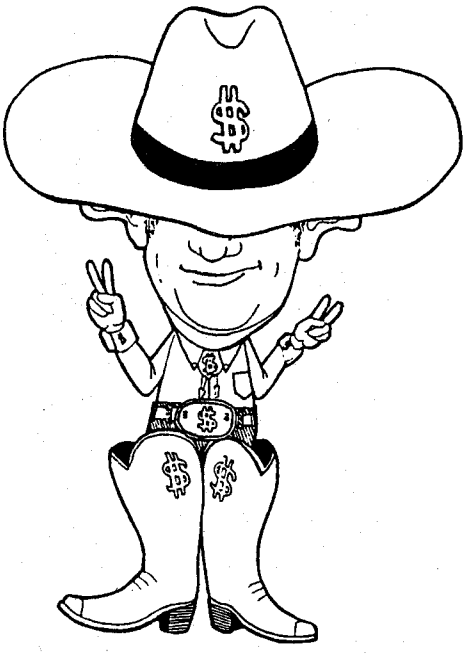

The cowboy won't debate the lady. Clayton's too busy laughing about rape being like bad weather: "If it's inevitable, just lay back and enjoy it," or planning to tear apart the Big Bend Natural Reserve to start his own concentration camp for "youthful drug offenders" who are to know the joy of "busting rocks." Lies, distortions and blatant misogynism are coupled with a racist mentality that appeals to the KKK and the illiterate "Bubbas" who will make the Midland *millionaire the next Texas* governor if thinking Texans don't vote.

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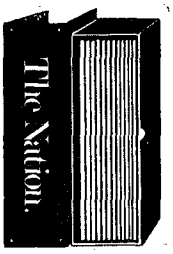

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Blues," "Rambling on My Mind" and "Preaching Blues," was issued. Other alternate takes surfaced over the years on specialty labels, like "Milkcow's Calf Blues" on *Bottleneck Blues* (Yazoo). And recently, a set of eight alternate takes came out from Albion Records.

In the nearly three decades since the first CBS compilation, rockers from the Rolling Stones and Eric Clapton on down reinterpreted much of Johnson's material for young audiences who'd never heard of him and in the process redirected the genre's sound. Then too, thanks to the untiring detective work of historians like Mack McCormick, who doggedly pursued flimsy decades-old leads to dig up Johnson's relatives and friends, the biographical picture gradually took shape. By the time Guralnick's *Searching for Robert Johnson* (Obelisk/Dutton) was published last year, it could (with generous acknowledgments to McCormick) present a fairly complete and compelling picture of the seminal blues great's life and times.

So now, with the usual major-label fanfare, comes *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* (CBS). This two-CD set is just what the title says; for the first time, all forty-one takes of Johnson's twenty-nine tunes are collected in one place. But the digitally remastered sound is no better than that on the earlier Driggs albums. And the added come-on—a forty-eight-page booklet that boasts fans' appreciations by Keith Richards and Eric Clapton as well as an essay, lyric transcriptions and discographical data written and gathered by would-be Johnson biographer (and the reissue's co-producer) Stephen LaVere—is less than it seems.

I say "would-be" because LaVere's lack of insight is, along with corporate insensitivity, what keeps this long-awaited compilation (it's been in the works for more than fifteen years) from being more than just a collection; certainly his notes don't leave me panting for his book. The biographical section does present the facts, but it slips too often into uninspired rehashes (especially of McCormick and Guralnick) alongside colorful but fanciful stretches of the known data. On the other hand, the section called "The Music" is simply appalling. Some samples:

> The dilemma of playing music for the rural mentality, while striving to divorce himself from it, not only served to extend to its furthest reaches the form and capabilities of the country

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blues, but since a strong element thereof is one of self-destruction, it quite logically and perhaps predictably, destroyed itself—its form and more importantly, its relevancy to its culture—and its practitioner as well, as a direct result. . . . Regardless of what Johnson was singing about, the reality of his situation can be powerfully felt.

Certainly he felt this and knew it, too, but it is obvious from his own words that he didn't understand it. . . .

This unconsciousness or awareness of the subconscious without a thorough understanding of its implications is the most pathetic aspect in all of Johnson's being. . . .

Johnson shrouded his ignorance while confessing his confusion in four main thematic communities. Those of love, mainly unrequited; traveling, usually fleeing; evil thoughts, especially wrongdoing by himself or a lover; and intent mental activity dominated his work. He acknowledged being out of control with his surroundings, his fate, his destiny, and yet he wasn't satisfied to blindly accept that fact, at least not without a good deal of thought.

Certainly LaVere could never be accused of a good deal of thought. Johnson's music is so tough-minded and taut, so rife with rich imagery and rippling with sexual and supernatural energy, so supple with humor and double-entendres as it plumbs the echoless places within the human psyche, that the only explanation for LaVere's characterizations is romantic racism. What he gives us is Johnson the nach'l nigger, anatomized, as by a lobotomized Northrop Frye, into his ridiculous "four main thematic communities."

Almost as unfortunate are LaVere's lyric transcriptions, which include phonetic inconsistencies that are intended to represent some, but not all, of what LaVere calls "Johnson's dialectic pronunciation." Then there are the misrepresentations, errors and omissions that riddle LaVere's version of Johnson's words and their meaning. Of what value is an annotator who cites *Webster's* to explain "crossroads" and "hellhound" and "break down" but neglects to explain any of Johnson's double-entendres—like the shrimp in "Dead Shrimp Blues," a term for whore that originated in the seventeenth century? Why does LaVere point to "the only instance in Johnson's lyrics where he uses the uncontracted present participle" and underline several passages of meaningless syllables which, he explains, "are phonetic approximations of what Johnson sings, which, in truth, may be nonsensical"? And as a transcriber—well, let's just say that LaVere drops the last verses of "32-20 Blues."

In some important ways, the flaws of *Robert Johnson: The Complete Recordings* reflect more than LaVere's incompetence. With the triumph of the CD, the record companies—those corporate custodians of our cultural history—have been rushing to unload the vaults they'd so blithely ignored for the past twenty years. Some of the reasons are simple: CDs are more profitable than LPs were. Old material can be resold to its audience with a minimum of effort in time and dollars; thanks to massive advertising, "digital" now automatically means "better," even though the translation of any single piece of music from analog to digital technology is a matter of myriad small decisions that each producer and engineer makes differently, thus creating a highly variable meaning for the words "digital transfer."

So for the record companies, CD boxed sets—collections of musical careers—are all the rage, and Johnson's illustrates the strengths, weaknesses and limitations of the genre. It's obviously important and valuable that the widespread musical treasures of this country's regionally and ethnically diverse populations be treated with respect and not be left to molder away unheard. But *how* to do that is the question.

Only a collector or a critic would want to sit down and listen to two or three takes in a row of the same song, and even a critic would probably tire of it pretty quickly. Records, after all, are aesthetic experiences that, like any other, have a form: Artists and their producers make decisions based on their aesthetic assumptions about which takes of tunes to release. With the advent of the album, choosing the order of the tunes became an art, and not only with such 1960s "concept" albums as *Sgt. Pepper.* Musicians and producers strove to create an overall aesthetic impact, a meaningful shape that would make an album more than just a collection of tunes.

When a historical compilation covers a long career, chronology can be a useful key to an artist's evolution; hearing Eric Clapton grow over a sensitively thought-out set of selections like *Crossroads* (Polydor), for instance, can teach initiate and fan alike. But it can only do that because it involves pleasure. Only the weird eat spinach because it's good for them, and they're the only ones who'll

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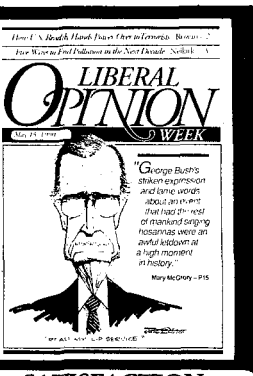
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suffer through even an exemplary by-the-numbers chronology just to learn something. If the tracks chosen and the order in which they are presented don't grab listeners, they won't have any. That's one defining distinction between an album and an archive. When PolyGram releases ten CDs with all of their Charlie Parker recordings (*Bird—Complete on Verve*) it is an enormously important archival act to be applauded and appreciated and bought by any reasonably serious jazz lover (and library), but it doesn't reach beyond the already converted.

In Robert Johnson's case, the argument for presenting his small body of work in purely chronological order is extremely weak. (And besides, as a couple of reissue producers have pointed out to me, if the matrix numbers for the original masters were out of sequence—a common occurrence—this set's supposedly strict chronology is fictitious anyway.) Johnson's entire recording career consists of a handful of sessions over an eight-month span. Nothing in the tunes suggests any major or minor shifts in his talent or vision. Of course, he predated the LP and CD, but since his three-minute performances were so highly conceptualized, it's easy to see that Frank Driggs's original LP compilations extended and articulated Johnson's own aesthetic frames. After you've listened to the Driggs albums, LaVere's approach seems about as meaningful as a sentence that's been taken apart and restacked in alphabetical order. After all, if you're curious about chronology, you can always check the discographical info that's included.

Fortunately for the Johnson set as well as for the countless reissues of individual albums on which alternate takes break the original conceptual flow, technology, which is part of the problem, is also the solution: Program the original sequence into your CD player. In Johnson's case, use the order of the two Driggs albums followed, if you're interested, by the alternate takes. That way, you'll get some sense of why Johnson could inspire hosts of musicians like Keith Richards, who's quoted in the booklet as saying, "You know, you think you're getting a handle on playing the blues, and then you hear Robert Johnson—some of the rhythms he's doing and playing and singing at the same time, you think, 'This guy must have three brains!' "

In many ways, musicians understand their art best. Eric Clapton has never been accused of being a critical theorist, but for an aesthetic understanding of Robert Johnson's music he's a more useful guide than LaVere, who, in addition to his other flaws, had the gall to copyright Johnson's tunes under his own King of Spades Music. (Peter Guralnick was originally scheduled to write the notes for this package, which would have made them intelligent and useful; he set up the interviews with Richards and Clapton. Unfortunately, his Clapton transcription is marred by randomly italicized portions, an all-too-apt symbol for CBS's haphazard approach to this project.) It's worth pondering when the guitarist says of his idol's music, "His best songs have never been covered by anyone else, at least not very successfully—because how are you going to do them? In some ways a song like 'Hellhound on My Trail' is hardly there, it's almost in the air—what he doesn't say, what he doesn't play, it's so light and menacing at the same time. . . . It would just be great if people could simply appreciate his music for what it is, for its truth and its beauty, without its having to be a scholarly event." □

LETTERS.

(*Continued From Page 366*)

Ridgeway has just completed *Blood in the Face: The Ku Klux Klan, Aryan Nations, Nazi Skinheads, and the Rise of a New White Culture*, which will be published in late fall by Thunder's Mouth Press. In this book, Ridgeway draws on years of investigation to detail the history, beliefs and explosive growth of this movement, illustrating its intrinsic ties to mainstream American culture. He supplements his account with photographs, and clandestine and semisecret documents such as recruiting pamphlets, racial cartoons and the texts of threats, sermons and police reports. He also profiles such key figures as David Duke and Tom Metzger, and the full range of racialist organizations, including The Order and Posse Comitatus.

Michael Schwartz
Neil Ortenberg
Jean Casella
Thunder's Mouth Press

The Nation welcomes letters – typed, double spaced and no longer than 300 words, please. Longer letters may be edited for reasons of space. Our policy is to publish as many letters as space permits, but inevitably a backlog develops, so please bear with us.

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A	W	O	R	D	■	T	O	T	H	E	W	I	S	E	■
U	■	T	■	O	■	E	■	E	■	S	■	T	■	P	■
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C	■	S	■	T	■	P	■	U	■	O	■	S	■	S	■
O	P	P	O	S	I	T	E	N	E	S	S	■	■	■	■
P	■	I	■	■	■	■	■	N	■	M	■	M	■	P	■
L	U	L	U	S	■	A	M	Y	L	O	W	E	L	L	■
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Crossword Puzzle No. 2306

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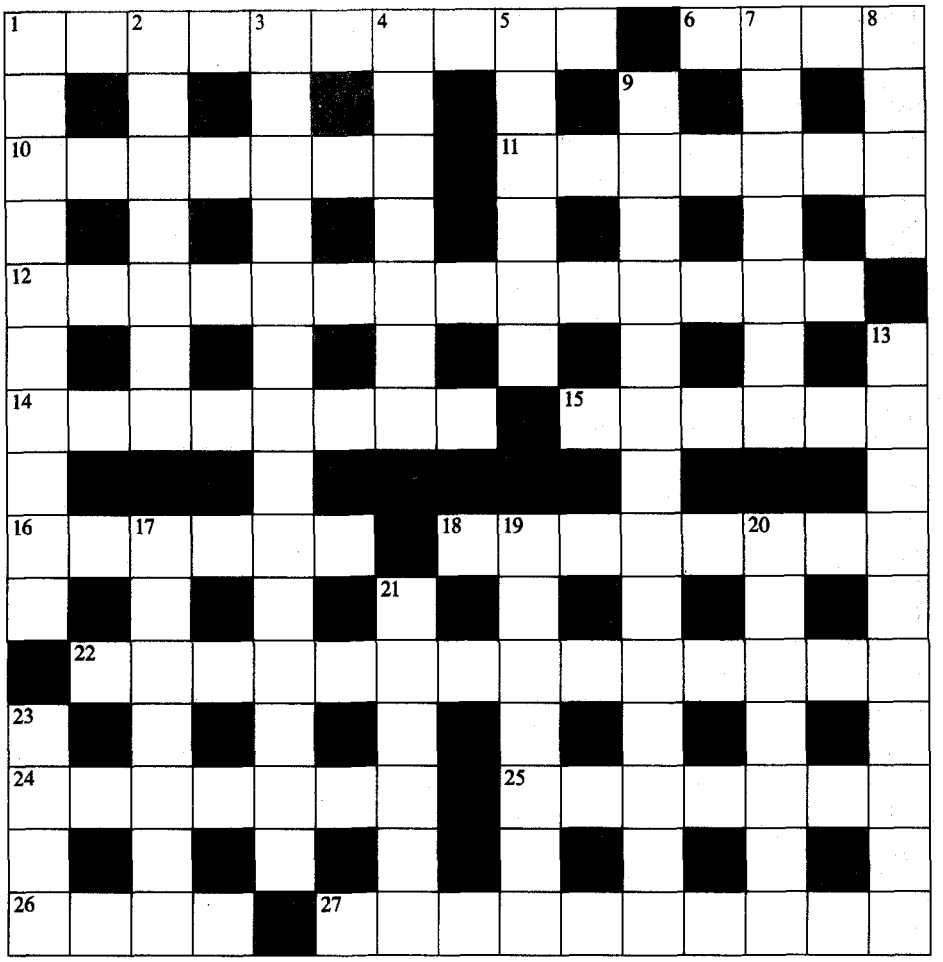

ACROSS

1 Make a picture of something like the Brooklyn type—something they used to put up as protection. (10)
6 and 18 Something to put on a mad literary figure, like one that is occasionally wild and stormy! (4,8)
10 Picking them up on the way home is considered unsporting. (War engulfs French wheat!) (7)
11 Go through a book with 5 down—and take the blame once again! (7)
12 Make something of a job, then go back and rather smartly hit on what the girl has. (They might just make the dance!) (14)
14 Everything—and nothing—on the way to being unlike the homeopath. (8)
15 Well-known agency of the Dunes country. (6)
16 Doesn't run out like a wolf in disguise! (6)
18 See 6
22 Well, they certainly hope for the best. (14)
24 Allows ice into the cracked lens, which could be poetic. (A flawless but excited atom sits nervously.) (7)
25 A hit with one of the things Santa traditionally gives—possibly early American. (7)
26 A short distance around the house, perhaps. (4)
27 How they hose down outbuildings might be considered a point of division. (10)

DOWN

1 and 23 The party might benefit from such a partner, behaving in a way in which everyone should participate. (14)
2 Not exactly fair output of O.P.A., but you might get a lift from it. (7)
3 Fixing things up so shells won't bother you? (Taurus, that mixed-up pet, is over the attic.) (6-8)
4 Unusual vision—and within view! (7)
5 Cousin to this? Uncle Sam might provide one—the very beginning article! (6)
7 Publicity bogs down with the way one appreciates certain things. (7)
8 If such small creatures had nothing on, it would be very outdated afterward! (4)
9 What one used to do on Monday, not up to the Scot's seeing the President's neighbors. (14)
13 They sometimes get tossed, if they aren't the lucky type. (10)
17 A sort of fire certainly starts to be more raging. (7)
19 What part of the washer did to upset you? (7)
20 Say again? (The remainder ingested, obviously!) (7)
21 On the surface, it's unpleasant, and came unexpectedly around the zone's extremes. (6)
23 See 1 down

PUZZLED?

No more cross words. If you don't see why "Lures" are "Ground Rules," send for those of Mr. Lewis to *The Nation*, 72 Fifth Avenue, New York, NY 10011.

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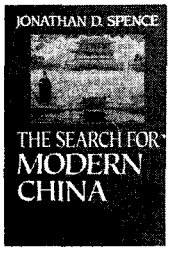

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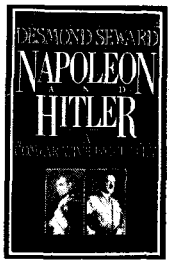

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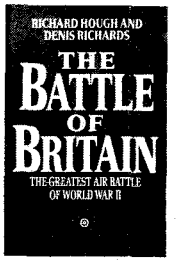

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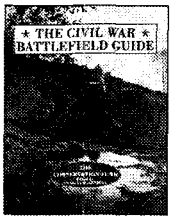

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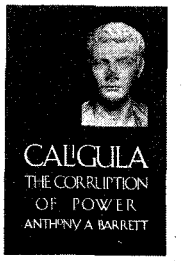

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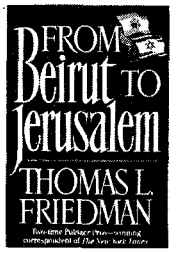

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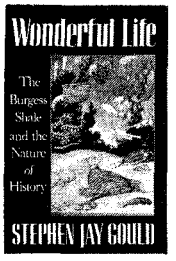

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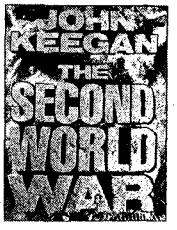

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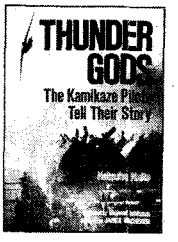

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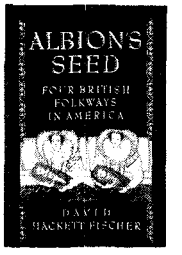

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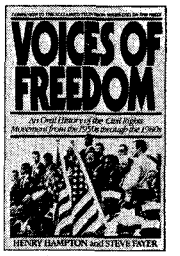

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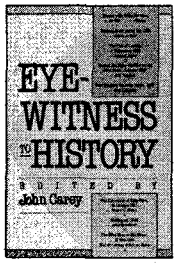

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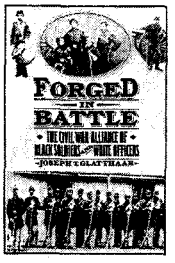

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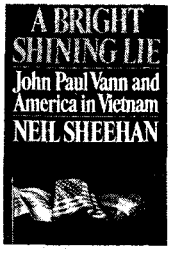

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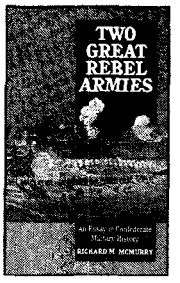

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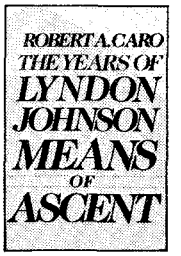

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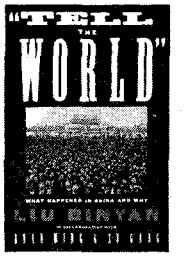

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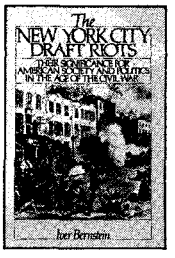

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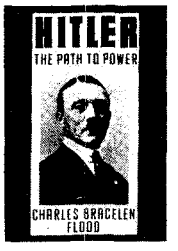

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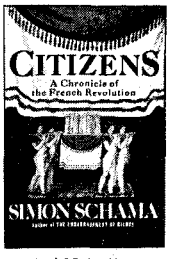

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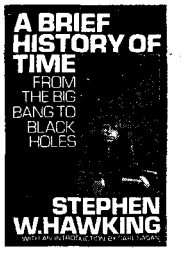

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